DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 202 040 CS 206 320

AUTHOR	Gallo, Donald R., Ed.
TITLE	Living with Adolescent Literature.
INSTITUTION	Connecticut Council of Teachers of English.
PUB DATE	80
NOTE	190p.; The Connecticut Council of Teachers of English is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English.
JOURNAL CIT	Connecticut English Journal; v12 n1 Fall 1980
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adolescent Literature; Censorship; Drama; Elementary Secondary Education; English Curriculum; *English Instruction; Language Usage; *Literature Appreciation; Minority Groups; Novels; Poetry; *Reading Interests; Reading Materials; Sex Role; *Student Motivation

ABSTRACT

The 32 articles in this special journal issue are intended to familiarize teachers with recent, good young adult literature and to provide them with ways of integrating it into the literature curriculum. Topics discussed in the articles include: (1) the changing hero in young adult literature, (2) book clubs, (3) the place of young adult fiction in a high school reading center, (4) the theme of child abuse in young adult literature, (5) arguments and tactics used by censors, (6) the black teenager in young adult novels by award-winning authors, (7) fictional models for female readers, (8) the use of fiction in drug education, (9) what students read during their summer vacations, (10) using realistic language in young adult books, (11) the theme of power in young adult literature, (12) the adolescent in dramatic literature, (13) poetry for adolescents, (14) recurring themes in recent Mexican-American fiction, (15) a composite portrait of the teacher in selected novels for adolescents, (16) young adult literature as a guidance technique, (17) urban teenagers' concerns and young adult novels, (18) science fiction literature as a boon to both teachers and students, (19) how teachers use the young adult novel in the English classroom, and (20) portraits of father/son relationships in contemporary adolescent literature. (FL)

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CONNECTICUT ENGLISH JOURNAL

A Publication of the Connecticut Council of Teachers of English

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LIVING WITH ADOLESCENT LITERATURE

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CS206320

VOLUME 12 NUMBER 1 FALL 1980

Preface

The existence of a literature for teenagers cannot be denied. In recent years an increasing number of English teachers have not only accepted young adult literature but also have come to recognize the quality of much of that literature. For others, seeing the value of that literature is quite another matter. Too many members of our profession are still uninformed, still reticent, still skeptical--even hostile--about books they did not read when they were students. Too many of us look down our noses at catchy titles and colorful paperback covers, prefering more staid, time-tested titles, forgetting that most of the Good Literature we teach was written for adults--cultured, well-educated ones at that--and not for teenagers from all sorts of backgrounds and with all levels of ability.

Because good young adult literature has virtually exploded on the scene during the past dozen years and has not been included within the college curriculum for most teachers, the lack of knowledge of this field which many secondary English teachers possess may not be entirely their fault. The proliferation of adolescent literature can be partly measured by the size of this publication--the biggest in the history of the CEJ--compared with the CEJ's fall 1972 issue on the same topic which contained only four articles within all of 28 pages.

For those among us who have tasted and perhaps even relish this literature for young adults, this issue offers encouragement and additional insights. We hope also that these articles will tempt less enthusiastic English educators to investigate some of the books discussed herein. If nothing else, this issue shows all of us the tremendous number of new books which--if we intend to continue to pass ourselves off as informed, literary educators--we should not be missing.

Before you partake of the variety of tempting articles in this issue, you ought to be aware that no article contains its own bibliography. Instead, we elected to compile one--and it is massive--bibliography at the end of the publication. Although we chose not to list well-known classics and certain adult books whose titles are noted in the issue, we have tried to include from these articles all titles of young adult books plus several mass-market books which are popular with today's teenagers. Both hardcover and paperback editions are indicated where they are available, though we apologize for several blank spaces where we could not locate the necessary information.

You also ought to know that this issue could not have been produced without the assistance of Wendy Simmons who did the bulk of the work compiling the bibliography, Barbara Dowjat who typed the paperback reviews, and Virginia Kennedy who can now find time to read all those books she got so excited about as she typed the final manuscript, cheerfully and without complaint. A special thanks to them.

Thanks also go to Cathy Fitzgerald, Sandy Rich, and Joani Wissig of CCSC Graphics Department for the titles; to Janet Pagano of the Cromwell Public Library and Helen Pribram of the Russel Library in Middletown for their help in locating hard-to-find bibliographical information; to the authors, reviewers, and researchers for their contributions; to the students who responded to surveys and to their teachers who cooperated; and to Ken Donelson whose two previous issues of the Arizona English Bulletin (in 1972 and 1976) on this same topic provided an inspiration and a challenge.

Don Gallo

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The Young Adult Novel in the English Class — Do Teachers Use It?

Patricia A. Aubin

Fifty years ago Louise Rosenblatt[1] perceived the need to create the creative reader. She phrased the literary experience as a transaction between the reader and the text. For Rosenblatt the text is a stimulus which activates elements of the reader's past experience with literature and life. She brought to our attention the student voice, the individual's response. The Young Adult Novel takes note of Rosenblatt's transactional theory because underlying this genre is the belief that students are not blank tapes. Rather, they are active participants in the reading process with interests, needs, and at varying levels of understanding and appreciation in the developmental literary process. The proponents of the Young Adult Novel know that for students to grow in their appreciation and understanding of literature, they must be engaged, involved readers. Attention must be paid to the mind of the students as it meets the book if response is to be fostered.

Each year dozens of new Young Adult Novels appear on the market. Articles on the usefulness of this type of literature are prolific. Scholarly journals and popular magazines present articles dealing with specific authors for young adults, themes and issues raised by these novels, and the ways in which these novels support the transition between children's and adult literature.

But do we know how these novels are used in an English classroom? Are they used? With whom? Just what are teachers' attitudes toward and understanding of the Young Adult Novel? It was my purpose to attempt to assess the status of the Young Adult Novel in today's English classroom and to determine the current attitudes of teachers toward this type of literature.

THE SURVEY POPULATION

It was decided, because of practical financial considerations and the logistics of a single researcher handling excessive numbers of surveys, to limit the study population to a select group of members of the Massachusetts Council of Teachers of English. The Massachusetts Council of Teachers of English is a group of English educators with a membership of approximately one thousand who are committed to the improvement of English instruction in our schools. This group was chosen as a study population for a number of reasons: first, the secondary teachers who are members of the MCTE represented all types of educational institutions (urban, rural, suburban,

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Dr. Aubin teaches English at Watertown Senior High School in Watertown, MA. The findings reported here are based on her doctoral study which she recently completed at Boston University where she was a teaching fellow as well as a member of the Editorial Board for The Journal of Education.

vocational, regional, parochial, private); second, it was assumed that for teachers to seek out an association such as MCTE they must feel a strong commitment to the betterment of English instruction; it was also assumed that their membership indicated a dedication to quality learning as well as an interest in current educational theories, materials and methodology; finally, it was felt that teachers who support professional organizations might be more apt to participate in a survey of teacher attitudes and beliefs.

The survey population included only secondary teachers of English, those teachers who worked with grades nine through twelve. The reason being that the senior high school setting was where I felt the Young Adult Novel would have to fight its hardest battle for use against prescribed book lists and the so-called "classics," "great books" syndrome.

Two hundred and eighty teachers were contacted by mail and asked to fill out a background information sheet and a questionnaire form. Of those, one hundred returns were suitable for tabulation.

CHARACTERISTICS

The data collected from the background information sheet characterized the survey population in the following ways. First, they proved to be a well educated group, the majority of whom held a Master's degree. Second, they were experienced teachers having an average of more than twelve years of teaching behind them. Third, those who responded were predominantly female. Fourth, they taught most often in a suburban or urban school. Finally, better than half had not taken a course in adolescent literature, and of that group more than half were not interested in pursuing the subject.

FINDINGS

The survey itself produced a mixture of responses. The questionnaire covered the following areas of interest: 1) teachers' personal knowledge of the Young Adult Novel; 2) particular types of students with whom Young Adult Novels might be used; 3) whether teachers actually use Young Adult Novels in their intensive reading programs; 4) limitations that teachers might experience in book selection; 5) teachers' relationships with school and public librarians; 6) teachers' use of professional journals and involvements in professional conferences; 7) teachers' use of book clubs; 8) the availability of Young Adult Novels in classrooms and school libraries.

The survey revealed that many of the teachers do not read Young Adult Novels. If this is the case, it is difficult indeed to believe that teachers can make competent decisions on the use of the Young Adult Novel in the classroom. If teachers are unaware of what is being produced for an adolescent audience, how do they make good choices of specific titles and inform their students?

Second, teachers reported that they were more apt to encourage the use of the Young Adult Novel in outside reading programs. It would seem that teachers perceive this genre as less than adequate for classroom use.

Third, teachers were more positive about this genre when discussing its use with their less able students and less likely to make use of this material when working with their more able students.

Fourth, a majority of teachers did not take advantage of professional journals and/or conferences where Young Adult Novels might be discussed. While teachers did report consultations with their school librarian, a majority of teachers had no contact with the local public librarian. Finally, it was found that, except for the school library, many students will not find Young Adult Novels available for them in their schools. Book clubs are even less popular among high school English teachers than are classroom libraries.

A majority of teachers who participated in this study revealed that not only do they personally choose the novels for their classroom teaching but they also have some input as to book selection for their English departments and their school libraries.

CONCLUSIONS

These findings lead to a number of interesting conclusions about the Young Adult Novel and its place in current English curriculums. The conclusions drawn in this study receive added support from the responses of teachers to open-ended questions which appeared at the end of the survey questionnaire.

It would seem that many of the teachers who participated in this study do not have a clear image of what a Young Adult Novel is; nor are they aware of the reading tastes of their students.

Three of the open-ended questions asked teachers to list, first, their personal Young Adult Novel favorites; second, their teaching favorites; and third, their students' favorites. When these lists were compared, there was little difference among them. This failure to distinguish, especially between teacher favorites and student perferences, might mean that teachers are unaware of what their students are actually reading. It is possible that most teachers provide little or no classroom time where students can bring in books, talk about them, and exchange titles. One teacher listed books such as Wuthering Heights and Great Expectations as Young Adult Novels that were her favorites as well as her students' favorites. While I do not dispute the claim that students might have found the previously mentioned titles enjoyable, it does seem doubtful that those titles are the personal reading favorites of the students involved.

A second conclusion to be drawn from the findings of this survey was that, in general, few of the teachers had a clear definition for the Young Adult Novel. Close to half of the responding teachers left that question blank. Of those who did respond, the characteristic most often mentioned in a definition was "relevance." Teachers felt that Young Adult Novels concentrated on issues peculiar to the interests of today's young adult. However, most teachers failed to isolate the Young Adult Novel's origin of publication, to specify the age of its intended audience, or to note literary characteristics peculiar to this genre. While relevance is important to the Young Adult Novel, an over emphasis on relevance can lead to a poorly written piece of literature. One teacher, negative about the Young Adult Novel, brought this problem to the fore when he wrote that the Young Adult Novel was "overly concerned with relevance and being au courant. They are difficult to 'sell' to teachers and/or communities who perceive of them as being cheap, 'popular,' or momentary." When assessing the Young Adult Novel, teachers must look for more than relevance of subject matter.

A third conclusion to emerge from the open-ended questions was that teachers see Young Adult Novels as written most often for their less able students. Comments such as the following were typical:

> They're good to catch the interest of the slow reader but I'm not crazy about using too many in class.
>
> For the lower level student, I see these novels as a strong motivating force.
>
> I think Young Adult Novels are good if they motivate slow readers to start and finish a novel.

These opinions re-emphasize the survey results. While it is true that the Young Adult Novel can be used successfully with the less able student, it should not be only this type of student who enjoys them. Teachers should not confuse the Young Adult Novel with the high interest, low vocabulary materials that have been produced for the disabled reader. Many Young Adult Novels are well written and make use of vocabulary that is as challenging as that of an adult novel. They are quality pieces of literature. Engdahl reminds us that "A serious novel for adolescents is distinguished from adult material by its conceptual and emotional levels, not by its reading level."[2]

Furthermore, teachers may not be aware of the developmental nature of the literary experience. Students cannot be asked to jump from children's literature to adult literature. The leap is too great and oftentimes there is a gap of lived experience that makes it difficult for a young adult audience to relate to and understand the more mature, sophisticated, and complicated works that are presented in the English classroom. This is a problem that is not peculiar only to the less able student. Academically talented students, too, need a literature that will serve as a transition, a bridge into adult literary experiences.

This lack of emphasis on a literature that will assist students in making a transition from children's to adult literature may not always be the fault of teachers. Sometimes it would appear that course outlines place limitation on the choice of materials.

Teachers wrote:

> My choices for reading material for my freshmen (seniors are given strictly adult fare) is decided largely by our Humanities Program.
>
> In my college preparatory courses the issue is academic: we must bypass the "Y.A.N." route.
>
> I am a great believer in the classics. I have received special commendation from our Supt. for the last four years for the high achievement of my A.P. classes in the A.P. exam. These students read mostly classics.

Finally, there appears to be a negative bias against the Young Adult Novel. When asked for their personal opinion of the Young Adult Novel, a majority of teachers responded by describing it as a basically inferior form of literature. Teachers wrote:

> My observation suggests that it is generally inferior works of literature that are so classified.
>
> I believe in the classics even if they must be watered down.
>
> From limited experience, I've found them "obvious."
>
> I object to the jargon involved in this quasi-genre and also to the dilution of literature teaching to bipass (sic) the teaching of literature of substance and stature. We should be teaching material of human significance beyond the parochial or cultural in human experience.
>
> I find them a crashing bore. Their content could usually be boiled down into one short story.

Even those teachers who were positive about the Young Adult Novel were likely to describe it as "simplistic" and "immature."

What most teachers in this survey failed to realize was that simplicity of plot may distinguish the Young Adult Novel from adult literature; however, this does not make it a lesser form. Just as children's literature is marked by simplicity of format and characterization to fit the reading needs of its audience, so the Young Adult Novel presents a level of sophistication peculiar to the evolving literary awareness and understanding of its audience. This does not make it inferior. On the contrary, many superior Young Adult Novels have been and continue to be produced. The literary characteristics of this genre have been more clearly established as its intended audience has become more precisely defined.

It can be concluded that teachers are not totally aware of the literary characteristics of a Young Adult Novel. Margaret Early, when sharing her definition of the Young Adult Novel with me, wrote:

> A Young Adult Novel is likely to be fairly simple in plot development having fewer complicating sub-plots than more mature fiction, with characters that are simply drawn, or at least few that are complicated.

Young Adult Novels cannot be criticized for their simplicity. This lack of complication is the intention of a young adult novelist when he or she takes into consideration the reading needs of the young adult audience. Engdahl, a writer of science fiction for adolescents wrote: "Lack of complexity...should not be confused with a lack of profundity."[3]

I do not presume to argue that all Young Adult Novels are superior in quality and should be accepted unequivocally for classroom use. Like its counterpart in adult literature, some Young Adult Novels can be both mediocre and mundane. However, the Young Adult Novel has developed during the last fifty years to the degree that many novels produced for today's young adult audience deserve the immediate attention of teachers and students.

Today more than ever before, books need to be placed in the hands of students. They must come to understand and believe in the power of words. Ohmann wrote:

> Literature--the best that has been thought and imagined and written--...is an endless source of rich, vicarious experience, which permits us to imagine alternate worlds and criticize the present world.[4]

Students need to experience the panorama of human experience and emotion that only literature can provide. The Young Adult Novel is a growing phenomenon that teachers should not fail to appreciate. It can satisfy the need for vicarious experience at one stage of literary development and provide the gateway into the next.

FOOTNOTES

1. Louise M. Rosenblatt, Literature As Exploration, New York: Noble and Noble, Publishers, Inc., 1968, pp. 34-35.

2. Sylvia Engdahl, "Do Teenage Novels Fill a Need?" English Journal, 64, February 1975, p. 51.

3. Ibid.

4. Richard Ohmann, English in America, New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 23.

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The Essentials of Education and the Young Adult Novel With a Look at What Thomas Jefferson Might Have Thought of It All

Robert Small

Today, everyone knows what an education is supposed to give the person who is educated. The mayor knows; the plumber knows; the doctor knows; the librarian knows; the lawyer knows; the secretary knows. They all agree: students should graduate from high school well equipped in the basics, with the "essentials of education," as a recent prestigious statement has called these results of submitting oneself to the experience. Once again, we are trying to discover what education is for, why we perform it, why we suffer through it.

Thomas Jefferson knew nearly two-hundred years ago what was essential in education. But we have not carried out Jefferson's legacy. Rather, we have tried programing our youth. We have forced on them the lead of the "scholarly disciplines" rather than the silver and gold of wisdom and insight. We have tried to load on them the clay of adjusting to life as it is. Jefferson knew that neither life as it is nor the artificiality of the professional scholar are the aims of education. He designed houses, capitols, and colleges; he wrote the Declaration of Independence; he mastered the violin and brought the art of wine-making to this country. None of these concerns of his, he knew, lofty as they were, comprised education, certainly not the essence of the educated man or woman. Jefferson wrote the English language with a clarity, balance, and grace rarely equaled. He governed the nation with a brilliance that may never have been equaled since. President Kennedy, we have been told, invited the nation's Nobel Prize winners to the White House and commented that never had so much intellect dined in that house since Thomas Jefferson dined alone.

What, one might wonder, would Mr. Jefferson think of the massive education system we have created for the 1980s? What would he hope the children of his United States would carry away from a guaranteed twelve years of public school, from a nearly certain two years in a community college, from a college education attained by numbers he could not have imagined even in his most idealistic visions? Although he was himself a master of fact and information, Jefferson knew that a philosophical disposition, a desire to gain insights into human needs, beliefs, and hopes, was the most important characteristic of the citizens of a successful democracy. He knew that mere mastery of fact was a sign of the productive serf, not of the free man or woman.

In addition to serving as Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, VA, Dr. Small is Chairperson of the NCTE Committee to Revise Books For You and the newly elected Secretary of the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents--NCTE.

THE Y.A. NOVEL AND JEFFERSON

It may seem odd that young adult novels written in the 1970s and 1980s could be thought to have a relation to Thomas Jefferson's ideas concerning education. It seems to me, however, that nothing that we do in today's institutionalized educational system is more important to the attainment of Jefferson's ideal of the educated citizen than the efforts that English teachers make to lure students to examine, to raise questions about, to try to understand human life. Little philosophy is explored in today's public education. Even colleges and universities ignore the importance of ideas in favor of the skills needed by students to be engineers, architects, business executives. Vocational education everywhere predominates. In our time, skills, basic information, the talents of a machine seem to be valued more than the power of the human mind--and of humanity--to assess, to examine, to decide upon the value of ideas. Knowing grammar rules seems again to be vital, but writing with grace about important ideas means little or nothing. Writing with mechanical accuracy matters. What is said, though it may be vapid or, worse, spurious, hardly seems to be important. Simple correctness is paramount; ideas, observations, the meaning of experience effectively expressed, no longer matter.

Consequently, while the study of grammar rules and drill on a textbook writer's idea about spelling and usage are now easily sold to school board members and many worried parents, the study of literature has slipped more and more into the category of a "frill." Mr. Jefferson would surely rise up to protest. All English teachers should be only a step behind him in that philosophical protest march. Ideas carefully explored, human problems carefully considered are the essence of Jefferson's concept of education and the educated person. Ideas carefully examined should also be the essence of our concept of education. What profiteth a fact if it leads only to an ignorant life?

PHILOSOPHY IN AMERICAN SCHOOLING

What, during a typical school day, can middle school and high school students look at that deals for them with the important questions about the meaning of life and of things in general? Very little, unfortunately. Frequently, the only part of the school day that may challenge students' beliefs and ideas about life is the study of literature in their English classes. Not a frill, then, but, in fact, the single study that may have a chance of giving meaning to all the rest of learning, the now often ridiculed literature curriculum is the one dimension of institutional education that provides philosophical focus for the rest of what students learn--or, at least, are supposed to learn--in school. Knowing calculus or the history of the Fifteenth Century means nothing alone. In the context provided by understanding--or, at least, trying to understand--humanity, such technical knowledge becomes important. Literature, then, lends importance to the rest of education. It is not, certainly, a frill: it is the soul of education, the most basic, the most essential.

Of course, literature study can be reduced to nothing more than technical manipulation. We English teachers have often done a successful job of leaving out the essence of what we have had to offer. We have turned our important subject into just one more technical review of facts: plot structure, iambic pentameter, authors' names, dates of publication, rhyme schemes. How silly we have been! Such a fact-bound study may seem intellectually respectable, like physics and algebra, but the technological study of literature is untrue to the nature of literature as an active part of life.

LITERATURE STUDY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The great works of literature tempt us to teach them to children and teenagers. Still, we know that they were not written for children and teenagers. George Eliot surely did not have fifteen-year-olds in mind when she wrote *Silas Marner*; nor did Dickens when he wrote *A Tale of Two Cities*. Hawthorne certainly was not envisioning a sixteen-year-old reader when he wrote *The Scarlet Letter*, and Steven Crane clearly did not have in mind a high school junior when he completed the *Red Badge Of Courage*. But we insist on teaching those books to those inappropriate readers. Lured by the technology of books, rather than by their substance, we are easily carried away to a mechanical approach. Plot structures and the techniques of characterization are the mere mechanics of literature. In that vicarage, authors are treated as the engineers, editors as the mechanics, while critics and teachers are merely the commentators on the results. Nothing valuable exists in that way of looking at literature. In fact, if we accept that view of literature, we reduce the literary art--by too much attention to its art--to a dreary, mechanical following of rules. The grandeur of literature lies in its people, its ideas, its insights. The art merely makes it work. And even the art is ineffable, beyond our efforts to reduce it to mechanism.

If, however, there is an emphasis on people, ideas, and insights in the study of literature in the high school, surely it must concern itself with the books that students *can* read and understand, books that they can find meaningful, books that they can discuss with other students and with adults. Any book that students cannot read, cannot understand and see meaning in, cannot discuss is not, for them, a work of literature, however great scholars and critics may think that book to be. Rather, mechanical greatness should be a minor consideration in the selection of books for teenagers to read. The best books to challenge the ideas of teenage readers, the evidence is clear, are young adult novels like *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich* (Childress) and *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume). Students respond to books by authors like Judy Blume, Alice Childress, Katie Lyle, and M. E. Kerr. Young adult novelists, like the great writers for adults such as Tolstoy and Dickens, emphasize people first, then events. Behind all their works lie insights and profound ideas. Art is vital to them, but only as a means of producing literature that captures, that moves, that changes readers, that produces Mr. Jefferson's philosophical citizens. Blume's Margaret combines art and challenging insight. So do

Sue Ellen Bridgers' great novels Home Before Dark and All Together Now. Richard Peck's Father Figure is a challenging and thoughtful novel by this master of style. Katie Lyle's Golden Shores Of Heaven and Paula Fox's Slave Dancer skillfully combine splendid writing and a challenge to the young reader's ideas and beliefs.

If we English teachers move, change, begin to emphasize the thought as well as the fact and the skill of literature, the study of literature will likely come to be seen by both our colleagues and our critics as more than a frill. Our enemies may even come to admit that literature study is the essence of the preparation of the educated man and woman. American education has reduced the study of painting, sculpture, architecture, and music to "frill" status. Neither Monet's lilies nor Michelangelo's David, neither Chartre nor Don Giovanni are very much studied in our schools. But, then, neither are Time covers, new statues in parks, the local city hall, nor the songs of Loretta Lynn. Soon literature study may be added to the list of subjects deemed unimportant, unworthy of support by taxpayers. Novels and poems, short stories and essays will, then, be relegated to that vast body of human product too great to be studied in school, too esoteric, by the anti-intellectual masters of the curriculum.

Only the really fine young adult novels of our time have a chance of holding on to the curriculum of the American high school as a requirement for all students. Painting and sculpture, ballet, architecture, the opera and the symphony all are lost. If profound ideas are to remain in the curriculum of the American high school, the YA novel must be there. We must, finally, in 1980, accept the value of first-class novels with appeal for teenagers, novels such as Winning (Brancato) and Roll Of Thunder, Hear My Cry (Taylor), not as "pop" novels (as one of my less enlightened students called them) but as works ideally designed to challenge the teenage reader to think, to try to understand, and to develop ideas about humanity.

If we do that, we can, at last, produce a plan for the study of literature that looks both at its art and at its revelation of the essence of being human. The art is surely there, and there is no question that Judy Blume, Katie Lyle, Sue Ellen Bridgers, and the other fine young adult novelists of our time provide their readers with the insights, the challenges to their ideas that great literature should. The best of the young adult novels of our time hold up well under the mechanical scrutiny of literary technologists. They can be dissected for matters of plot, characterization, theme, setting. More important, they explore, without didacticism but with profound insight, the struggle that being human involves. That they do so in the context of being a twelve-year-old or a fifteen-year-old human is their strength, not their weakness. Their grandeur is that they can teach and can be taught and can still survive as literature. Not even Charles Dickens or Jane Austen can claim more. Few authors can claim as much.

I began this disucssion with Thomas Jefferson and would like to conclude by citing him again. He believed that democracy could only survive on the foundation of an educated populace. Education, for him, was clearly more than crafts, career education, skills, the mechanical of life and art. He sought to master mathematics, biology, agriculture, prose style, music, architecture, and whatever else there was to master from human creation. But he recognized that understanding, not merely knowing, was essential to education.

Of all the subjects taught in the modern secondary school, literature has the greatest potential to lead students to be more than mere mechanics. As it is so often taught, however, it emphasizes the mere mechanics of itself. It discards its importance for a pedestrian approach. In addition, it selects the best of its art and, therefore, the worst of its genre for teenage readers. In addition, it is under fire from the "competency" advocates, the "basics" fanatics, those obsessed with "testing." Jefferson, I believe, would have understood that children need to read what children can find moving and that teenagers need to read what they find moving. It is sad that we, the English teachers of 1980, fail to understand that simple concept. Jefferson, I suspect, would have seen the value in Jane Austen and Leo Tolstoy, had he lived to read them. He would also have understood that most teenagers would not. He would have recognized that he, as author of the Declaration of Independence and founder of the University of Virginia, was different from himself as a fifteen-year-old. If we can accept that rational insight, we may be able to save the study of literature, even raise it to the jewel of the curriculum. Otherwise, we will see it reduced to a frill, to an elective, to a budget item cut for economy. Thomas Jefferson would surely weep to see education in his country so reduced. You and I should also weep.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Edge of Next Year by Mary Stolz.
Dell, 1979. 219 pp. $1.50.

The Woodwards had moved into an old farm house surrounded by fifty acres of rolling countryside and apple orchards. Eliot is a successful journalist and free lance writer. His wife Rose, a well educated, non-traditional woman, had inspired the move to the country. Eliot and Rose, along with 14-year-old Orin and his 11-year-old brother Victor, spend much of their leisure time together sitting in the orchard reading poetry and observing their natural surroundings. Then Rose dies in a car crash. Eliot falls apart emotionally and takes to heavy drinking. Orin becomes the only hope for preserving some semblance of family life for his brother and himself. Mary Stolz beautifully contrasts descriptions of the Woodward's natural environment with the ugly reality of their personal tragedy. The third person narrator concentrates on Orin, enlightening the reader in a most convincing fashion about the young boy's successful struggle to become an adolescent adult. Booklist gave this novel a starred review and said, ". . . stands far above others attempting to deal with similar problem situations." This reviewer heartily agrees!

Reviewed by Philip M. Connors, J.F. Kennedy Junior High School,
Enfield, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Arriving at a Place You've Never Left by Lois Ruby.
Dell, 1980. 143 pp. $1.50.

Lois Ruby has put together a series of seven short stories which highlight a teenager "at a moment of crisis and change" in his or her life. Each is an action packed, concise story which quickly absorbs the reader in the character and problem with which he or she must cope. The title story focuses on Rosalie who encounters hostile attitudes that remind her of the concentration camps her grandfather had left. In another story Ellen faces the horror of watching her mother suffer a mental breakdown. In yet another, Shana deals with the all too frequent teenage crisis of an unwanted preqnancy. What is particularly effective in this book are the endings of the stories which are not contrived, happy-ever-after, soap opera conclusions. Rather they show the author's fine grasp of reality. Ellen's mother is still hospitalized as the reader leaves her, although the prognosis is favorable. Shana faces the birth of her baby without the comforting presense of the father who shirks his responsibility until it is too late. Rosalie finds her grandfather's store up for sale because of the prejudice he encounters. All in all, this book is a welcome and effective addition to the choices available for students who need short, good quality, high-interest materials.

Reviewed by Judith L. Hinkle, Brien McMahon High School,
Norwalk, CT.

Who Read What on Their Summer Vacation

Donald R. Gallo and Wendy Simmons

Reading book reports will give English teachers some idea of what students are reading outside of assigned texts. But too often what students read for book reports is not what they prefer to read for their own pleasure or information. And since it seems to be wise for English and reading teachers to know what books and kinds of books interest students, and because interests change so rapidly, we attempted to discover what students have read recently on their own with no direction, no push, no encouragement from teachers. What they read during summer vacation time is probably the clearest indication of what they are interested in and, indeed, whether they are really reading at all.

In September we asked several teachers to survey their students in grades nine through twelve. From more than 500 high school students in seven towns throughout Connecticut we received answers to this question: "What books did you read during the summer for your own enjoyment or information (that were not required for some course)? List the best ones, starting with your favorite." Students were from high schools in Bolton, Bristol (Central), Plainville, Southbury (Pomperaug), South Windsor, Trumbull, and Watertown. Students were identified by grade as well as academic level by their teachers.

ARE STUDENTS READING?

Did the students we surveyed read during the summer? Yes and no. Students in the more advanced classes--such as Honors English and Advanced Placement--read far more than did students enrolled in remedial and basic skills types of courses, as would be expected. And the quality of the literature being read by the more advanced students was generally in keeping with their level of sophistication. For example, nearly every student in an advanced twelfth grade class in one school listed three or more books he or she had read last summer, while not a single book was listed by students in a remedial ninth grade class in another school.

And it appears that students in some schools read considerably more than students in others. In one school, for example, most of the tenth grade average ability students listed one or more books, while the sheets of a group similarly identified as tenth grade average students in another school contained many blanks. We were told, in fact, that in one school some teachers stopped distributing

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the questionnaire to students because they were embarrassed with the number of blanks that were returned. Reasons for these differences will be suggested later in this report.

THE TOP OF THE CHARTS

The single most notable characteristic of the titles which students listed was its diversity. These high school students had read all sorts of books during the summer, from Nancy Drew to Shakespeare's Richard III, and from young adult fiction such as Lisa, Bright and Dark to adult best-sellers such as Shogun. Few students among the several hundred we surveyed listed the same books. Variety ruled.

Nevertheless, a few titles continually appeared in class after class, the most frequently noted ones being of the horror/occult variety. The most frequently mentioned title was Stephen King's The Shining, noted by 21 students. Immediately behind that was V.C. Andrews' Flowers in the Attic with 20 recommendations and its sequal Petals in the Wind with 19. Others in the top ten follow in order:

# 4 Forever - Blume
5 Amityville Horror - Anson
# 6 Kramer Vs. Kramer - Corman
# 7 Wifey - Blume
8 The Outsiders - Hinton
9 Are You In The House Alone? - Peck
#10 The Empire Strikes Back - Glut

Those top ten are characterized not only by horror/occult but also by sexual themes and a certain amount of violence. Three of those top ten are young adult novels (#s 4, 8, and 9). More than half are film-related, most of which have appeared on TV.

Many of those titles were the most popular ones no matter what school or what grade we surveyed. The Shining, for example, was the second most popular title among ninth graders, third among tenth, and first among eleventh and twelfth graders. On the other hand, The Outsiders was most popular among ninth graders, as is to be expected because of the age of the main character and the level of writing in the novel. Similarly, Forever was more popular among ninth and tenth graders (the older students no doubt read that one the summer before). The popularity of The Empire Strikes Back obviously coincides with the release of the film; a survey from summer a year ago probably would have revealed Star Wars as a top-rated book.

OTHER BOOKS

Hundreds of other titles were noted by those high school readers The following list (in no order) shows the diversity of students' tastes as well as the reason for our inability to see any clear patterns of types or topics other than those we've already noted above.

James Michner's Hawaii
Robert Newton Peck's A Day No Pigs Would Die
Agatha Christie mysteries
Isaac Asimov's The Collapsing Universe
John Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath
Ann Head's Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones
Xaviera Hollander's The Happy Hooker
A Physics Workbook
Doris Lund's Eric
Norma Fox Mazer's Up in Seth's Room
John Jakes' The Bastard (and others in that series)
S. E. Hinton's That Was Then, This Is Now
Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter
John Knowles' A Separate Peace
Eric Marie Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front
1979 Football Handbook
William Sleater's House of Stairs
Ellery Queen
Ayn Rand's The Fountainhead
Robin Cook's Coma
Judith Krantz' Scruples
Colleen McCullough's The Thorn Birds
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s Cat's Cradle
Margaret Mitchell's Gone With The Wind
J. R. R. Tolkien's The Hobbit
Peter Benchley's Jaws
Go Ask Alice

Although the more sophisticated titles were noted by the more advanced students in the higher grades, teachers should be as pleased as we were to see that as a group students were not reading only the mass-market, adult-oriented, horror stories. They are also reading great classics, good young adult novels, and reputable popular books along with mysteries, science, science fiction and sports books.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

Older students understandably were more likely to read more typically adult books, such as Scruples, The Thorn Birds, and Shogun.

Students who liked one particular type of book often read more of the same type. For example, someone who listed The Omen first, often listed Damien--Omen II; or Jaws was usually followed by Jaws II and The Deep. Flowers in the Attic was almost always followed by Petals in the Wind.

Many of the books noted as favorites by the students were also films, supporting the notion that both feature films and made-for-TV films can and do influence students' reading in a positive way.

Except for more capable students reading the more sophisticated books and some low-ability students reading nothing at all, there was very little difference in reading interests between different ability groups. In fact, in a similar survey of sixth graders in three classes in a Glastonbury school, the top books were similar to the high school selections: *The Hobbit*, *Kramer Vs. Kramer*, and *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, though the sixth graders also listed a larger percentage of young adult titles than generally appeared in the high school surveys.

Many students who had not read books during the summer noted that they did read magazines--such as *Glamour*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Seventeen*, *Golf Digest*, *Playgirl*, and *Playboy*--and the daily newspaper.

The most enthusiastic reader was a boy in a remedial tenth grade class who said he read S. E. Hinton's *That Was Then, This Is Now* eight times!

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Readers of this rather informal survey can draw whatever other conclusions they feel are justified by the findings. The most important thing we see in the study is that although quite a few students did no summer reading, the majority of high school students *did* read on their own. And as a group they read a wide variety of *books*, albeit the more widely read titles are adult, pot-boiling horror stories. It is reassuring to see classics among the other more lurid stories. It is also pleasing to us advocates of young adult literature to see familiar titles among those books students choose to read on their own.

As educators we were disappointed, however, in the number of students who did no reading at all. That lots of normal kids do not read during the summer is not surprising. What is puzzling, as we noted earlier, is that certain schools had a noticeably larger proportion of students who had read nothing. Because our sample was relatively small when one considers there are 169 towns in the state and that not every type of class was surveyed in each school, it might be natural to find such discrepancies among schools. Or perhaps a larger proportion of students in one town work during the summer and thus have less leisure time in which to read than students in another town. There is another factor that, though speculative, may provide a different explanation. From what we know about the schools we surveyed, some are understandably more restrictive in their literature programs than others. Although the conclusion suggests the need for additional investigation, it is our feeling that in schools where there is a freer atmosphere, where there is less concern for forcing "good" literature on kids, and where the school and classroom libraries contain quantities of paperback novels for adolescents, more students are reading widely on their own compared to schools which are more conservative in their course offerings, more restrictive in what they encourage students to read, and more limiting in what their libraries have to offer.

It is also a concern to us that there aren't more young adult titles on the lists of books which high school students have read and enjoyed. On the basis of evidence detailed in other articles in this issue, as well as from what we have observed, good young adult novels appropriate for high school readers are *not* readily available in many schools or town libraries, though the situation is much better than it used to be. Elsewhere in this issue Sharron Freeman reports on the incredible amount and variety of reading being done by students in one middle school in West Hartford. That town certainly has a higher level of wealth as well as student achievement than some of the towns in our survey. But one of the key factors in the reading of students in King Philip Middle School is a library containing loads of young adult books, an active and aware librarian, and a staff aware of and interested in more than required reading of a limited curriculum. The evidence there speaks for itself.

We can hardly expect students to be reading certain kinds of books when they have no easy access to those books. Nor can we expect students to even know about many good young adult books unless we help to inform them. We hope this journal issue will provide teachers with information about new and highly recommended books they can share with students.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Alan and Naomi by Myron Levoy.
Dell, 1980. 176 pp. $1.50.

Alan and Naomi is a powerful character study of two young Jewish children in the United States during World War II. Alan is American, naive, and distanced from the war. To him, the battles are heroic, the action swift, decisive, and always victorious for those on the side of God and Good. His adolescent fantasies of piloting fighter planes only serve to underline the basic unreality of war's horrors to Alan. Enter Naomi, a young girl from Europe whose father perished in the Holocaust. She is withdrawn, speechless, and taken to shredding paper continuously. To Alan, she is insane. This issue and their growing relationship form the central conflict of the novel. How can Alan, and we readers, hope to penetrate an experience so alien from humanity as the one from which Naomi has emerged? The final battles of war are fought inside the mind, a territory not easily invaded. The book is written for the average reader, with excellent characterization and sense of place. *Alan and Naomi* is highly recommended for grades 9 and 10, especially for use in units involving conflict, war, or the Holocaust.

Reviewed by Joseph R. Calabro, Pomperaug High School, Southbury, CT.

Students at King Philip Middle School Are Definitely Reading!

Sharron Freeman

Being new to West Hartford, Ct., and having only a glimmering of what adolescents in this part of the state are reading, I decided to survey the middle schools (7th and 8th grades) to find out what the students were reading. I originally planned to survey all of the students in 7th and 8th grades in West Hartford, but had to settle for a sampling from one school and save the others for a later time.

King Philip Middle School has a population of a little over 600 students in grades 7 and 8. I created a three-question survey to be given to each student by the English teachers. The questions were brief yet open-ended enough to elicit longer responses if the student was interested in listing a lot of titles. The returned forms from 421 students show that the students at King Philip are definitely reading!

Because I was interested more in what students were reading for their own enjoyment rather than in exactly how many students had read a specific title, this report does not contain specific numbers or percentages. It was sufficient for my needs to simply note the authors and titles that were mentioned most often by these students. It should be noted, however, that the most important characteristic of this group was its diversity. Even the most frequently mentioned book in the 8th grade--Flowers in the Attic--was noted by only 23 students, while many of the titles below received considerably fewer recommendations. Nevertheless, the large number of responses and the wide variety of titles indicate clearly the reading tastes and the enthusiasm of the students in this one middle school.

The overall favorite author of both 7th and 8th graders was Judy Blume. She was mentioned the most by both boys and girls--a sign that her books are changing hands quite frequently. Favorite titles ranged from Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret; Blubber; Deenie; Starring Sally J. Freedman as Herself; and Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing to her more sophisticated Forever. Paula Danziger was next in popularity with The Cat Ate My Gymsuit, Can You Sue Your Parents for Malpractice? and The Pistachio Prescription.

Both grades (and sexes) recommended highly Lois Duncan's books, especially I Know What You Did Last Summer, Madeline L'Engle's A Wrinkle In Time, A Wind In The Door, and A Swiftly Tilting Planet, and S. E. Hinton's That Was Then, This Is Now as well as The Outsiders and Rumble Fish.

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Other contemporary adolescent authors and titles recommended by several students in both grades:

Judy Angell--Ronnie and Rosey and In Summertime It's Tuffy
Anonymous--Go Ask Alice
Alice Bach--The Meat In The Sandwich and They'll Never Make A Movie Starring Me
Ellen Conford--Hail, Hail Camp Timberwood; Dear Lovey Heart, I Am Desperate; The Alfred E. Graebner Memorial Handbook of Rules and Regulations; And This Is Laura; and We Interrupt This Semester For An Important Bulletin
Robert Cormier--The Chocolate War
Maureen Daly--Seventeenth Summer
Bette Greene--Summer of my German Soldier
Deborah Hautzig--Hey, Dollface
Isabelle Holland--Of Love and Death and Other Journeys
M. E. Kerr--Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack and I'll Love You When You're More Like Me
Norma Klein--Sunshine; Mom, the Wolfman and Me; Hiding; and Tomboy
Robert Lipsyte--One Fat Summer
Lois Lowry--Summer To Die; and Find A Stranger, Say Good-bye
Harry Mazer--The Solid Gold Kid
Betty Miles--The Real Me and The Troubles With Thirteen
John Ney--Ox: The Story of a Kid at Top; and Ox Goes North
Scott O'Dell--Island of the Blue Dolphins; and Kathleen, Please Come Home!
Richard Peck--Are You In the House Alone?
Robert Newton Peck--A Day No Pigs Would Die; and Soup as well as the other books in that series
Susan Beth Pfeffer--Starring Peter and Leigh
Kin Platt--The Ape Inside Me; and The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear
Thomas Rockwell--How to Eat Fried Worms
Mary Rodgers--Freaky Friday
Sandra Scoppettone--The Late Great Me and Trying Hard to Hear You
Jean Van Leeuwan--I Was a 98 Pound Duckling
Rosemary Wells--The Fog Comes on Little Pig Feet
Paul Zindel--The Pigman; My Darling, My Hamburger; The Undertaker's Gone Bananas; and Pardon Me, You're Stepping on my Eyeball

Balancing out the popularity of the contemporary fiction were quite a few "pulp" paperbacks, science fiction, mysteries, and a good showing of classics (which should cause the more traditional teachers to smile). Eighth graders chose V. C. Andrews as a hands-down winner, with Flowers in the Attic and Petals in the Wind as their favorites. Both grades mentioned The Shining, Coma, Jaws, The Amityville Horror, Shogun, and Thorn Birds as added favorites in the "supermarket-drugstore-paperback" category. Both 7th and 8th grade boys chose The Empire Strikes Back and Star Wars as favorite titles. The Black Stallion series was mentioned by both sexes and grades, as was William Sleator's The House of Stairs. Agatha Christie mysteries as well as The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew were also chosen as favorites by both grades.

Now, to get to the classics. Favorites were:

Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage
Rudyard Kipling's Captain's Courageous
Jack London's Call of the Wild
George Orwell's Animal Farm and 1984
John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men and The Pearl
Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn
Jules Verne's 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea
H. G. Well's The Time Machine

The following titles fit into the "classics" category as books that have been consistently read and passed around by generations of adolescents: Old Yeller, Death Be Not Proud, I Remember Mama, Gone With The Wind, and A Tree Grows in Brooklyn.

As far as science fiction is concerned, the 7th and 8th grades both mentioned over and over again C. S. Lewis' The Chronicles of Narnia, J. B. R. Tolkien's The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings, and Ursula LeGuin's A Wizard of Earthsea and The Tombs of Atuan. Mentioned on a smaller scale were: Isaac Asimov's Foundation, Ray Bradbury's Martian Chronicles and Fahrenheit 451, and Anne McCaffrey's Dragonsong and Dragonsinger.

Fitting into no specific category but worth mentioning is Wilson Rawls' Where the Red Fern Grows. This 1961 novel was chosen by 8th graders (and some 7th graders) as a favorite. It was listed so many times that I wondered if the entire 8th grade had either seen the movie or had to read the book when they were in 7th grade.

Another title which was mentioned over and over was Richard Price's The Wanderers, a book that was banned in Vergennes, Vermont, in a recent censorship crackdown. I have a feeling that many other titles on this list could qualify for censorship if the schools and parents wanted to make an issue out of them.

The students at King Philip Middle School, as shown above, are reading a variety of titles. Even though they prefer such contemporary authors as Judy Blume and Paula Danziger, they should be allowed to branch out and examine the myriad authors and genres so that they can decide for themselves which books they would like to recommend to their peers.

It's been very satisfying for my curiosity to have found out that the adolescents in one school are reading--and such a diversity of titles at that. I can't wait to find out what the rest of West Hartford's 7th and 8th grade population is reading so that I can complete the picture for myself--and for the students themselves who asked to have a copy of the results of the survey so that they could prove to their teachers that they are able to read for both enjoyment and edification.

The Changing Hero

Beverly Haley

We need heroes. They give hope and meaning in our lives. They rescue us from the evil that threatens us from without; but, more important, they can save us from the dark shadows that lurk within our selves. Those who need heroes most are teenagers. If there aren't a few heroes riding to the rescue on white horses or soaring through the barriers of space and time for adolescents, then a part of their lives may be forever lost.

Traditionally, heroes were "supermen." In earliest mythology, folk tales, and legends, heroes stood taller and stronger, brighter and more beautiful than ordinary mortals; they represented an ideal rather than the real. Men like the mighty Beowulf performed deeds other men could not. Beowulf proved himself a hero in his youth and spent a lifetime slaying dragons, solving riddles and protecting his people. But not only was the traditional hero strong and fearless and fierce against all evil--he also was humble in spirit and gentle and compassionate toward the innocent and the weak.

For all his strength and might, though, the hero possessed a fatal flaw--a flaw, perhaps, like pride or a vulnerable place in his ankle. This flaw would one day destroy him. Because he was human and therefore mortal, the hero could not perform his deeds of courage alone. He needed the help of the gods--or of God.

Fairy tales took a different twist. The fairy tale hero often was of humble birth or was the youngest, smallest, and weakest of several brothers or sisters. He or she was an outcast, looked down upon, stepped on, "used" by others. But beneath the rags lay hidden a nobility not seen by others. Just when life reached its lowest ebb for this lowly personage, a bit of magic transformed him or her into a hero: the "underdog" accepted the challenge of a series of tests others had tried and failed. With the help of a fairy godmother or other benevolent supernatural force, the hero met the tests and became a beautiful princess or a handsome prince--loved, lauded, and revered. The hero was willing to take risks, to "pay the price" of endurance, loneliness, pain, humiliation, and the probability of failure. Because people so readily identify with or can feel superior to this kind of person, the "underdog" is still a popular hero.

Since those long ago days of myths, legends, folk tales, and fairy stories, heroes in literature have undergone a series of

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transformations. Heroes today--when they appear--are short lived rather than enduring, to fit our "throw away" society. Some people today feel cheated of any find of heroes--in life or in literature. But maybe that's because today's heroes, like those in fairy tales, come in disguise. That disguise (unlike the disguise of fairy tales) must be uncovered by the reader--the writer doesn't do it for them.

Like the soldier in Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage, each of us asks ourselves whether we would be heroes or cowards in a crisis. We harbor a basic drive to find the answer to that question. The need's sharpest edge occurs in the young adult years and so adolescents desire and create situations to test themselves. When real life experiences fail to supply that craving, the young person can partially satisfy the hunger vicariously through movies, television programs, and books. The viewer or reader enters into the hero's skin and becomes elevated from an ordinary everyday human being into something larger and stronger and more noble.

This kind of unfolding from an ordinary sort of person into a person of heroic quality is dramatized graphically in Ursula K. LeGuin's Earthsea Trilogy. As he begins that journey toward being a hero-leader, Ged, known as Sparrowhawk, seeks the advice of the wise Ogion as to how to deal with the dark shadowy indefinable being that hunts Ged. Ogion astounds Ged by telling him he must turn around because: "If you go ahead, if you keep running, wherever you run you will meet danger and evil, for it drives you, it chooses the way you go. You must choose. You must seek what seeks you. You must hunt the hunter..." (p.128) Ged's search for this "source" echoes Joseph Conrad's Hearts of Darkness and the recent award winning film Apocolypse Now in the confrontation of the evil that lies within the self.

Although fantasies have regained popularity today, books true to life prevail. One of these real life stories shows two young brothers who must conjure up heroic courage when they run away from home during the Depression. Irene Hunt's No Promises in the Wind relates the kinds of violence, death, deception, and starvation the boys confront; but balanced against that are those few adults who care for them, help them, and nurture them. Because the narrator in particular has many human weaknesses, the reader identifies with him. The fact that the narrator eventually rises above his weaknesses and conquers the worst side of himself gives hope to readers that they, too, can become better than they are.

One kind of courage inherent in being American is the kind it takes to jump into this "melting pot" culture. Minorities need heroism to merge yet maintain their own identities. Hal Borland's When the Legends Die dramatizes the fear and confusion of a young Indian boy Tom, forced to adapt to the white man's ways when his parents die. Tom's struggle is his fight against those ways. Then an opportunistic old cowboy buys him for his talent with horses and turns Tom into a winning bronc rider. In the arena, Tom attempts to "ride away" his anger and hatred, becoming a rodeo hero in the process. But ultimately he must confront the real test in his life--that of defining who and what he really is.

Life and literature can require enormous courage simply to survive, just as in Hunt's *No Promises*.... Novels of the frontier days are excellent examples of this survival kind of heroism. Recently, books about "heroes who survive" include the true and largely true experiences of young Jewish people during Hitler's reign of Nazi terrorism. Among these are the familiar and loved book-drama-film versions of *Ann Frank: Diary of A Young Girl*. Others include Joseph Zieman's *The Cigarette Sellers of Three Crosses Square*; *Mischling, Second Degree* by Ilse Koehn; and *The Devil in Vienna* by Doris Orgel. But the ability, courage, strength, and ingenuity needed to survive are perhaps not the main qualities that characterize the young heroes in these real life stories. Rather, the *way* in which they survive--the fact that they hold onto personal pride and dignity and courage in the face of degradation and humiliation--marks them as "heroic."

Young people can sometimes be "victims" of adult attitudes and actions. Two novels that place young people in situations requiring heroic actions because of situations created by adults are Paul Gallico's *The Boy Who Invented the Bubble Gun* and Robert Cormier's *After the First Death*.

Gallico's young hero Julian boards a bus to Washington, D.C. from his home in Los Angeles. At age nine, Julian has invented a bubble gun and plans to get a patent on it so he'll become famous and rich, thus proving to his busy and successful father that he, Julian, is a person--and a person of worth. The bus is hijacked en route and a series of crises ensues, during which Julian becomes a national hero. At the end of the story, though, Julian must call up another kind of heroism within himself. The man who was his trusted friend throughout the cross-country trip betrays him once they reach Washington. And then when Julian returns home, despondent over his disillusionment, he discovers that he still must work to build a strong relationship with his father. Beneath the book's light tone lies the pathos of the failure of adults to be the heroes young people expect and want and need.

Cormier's *After the First Death* chronicles the events that follow a terrorist group's hijacking of a school bus filled with young children. Kate, the driver of the bus, is herself little more than a child--a child who's led the sheltered, even pampered, life of many American youngsters. Because she is just a substitute bus driver, Kate not only is unsure what the bus can and can't do, but she also must rely on her own untried ability to bear the responsibility for a group of young children. Miro, the teenage terrorist ready to join the "inner circle" once he kills Kate, is brain-washed to the point where he isn't even sure of his own name or age. On the outside edge of the hijacking action is Ben, a freshman college student, who lives in his father's shadow and becomes his father's "pawn" in the attempt to capture the terrorists and rescue the children. But young and inexperienced as all three are, each acts with courage to do what he or she thinks must be done to meet the crisis: Kate for the children, Miro for his "cause," and Ben for his father and for his country.

Because sports heroes usually are young, they provide a close tie for young readers. Books about these athletes who succeed show real people who have gone beyond failure, loneliness, and pain to attain high goals. Each story shows a different way that living heroes rise above the "masses." Each says: It can be done! And this is how I did it! A fiction story of two very different kinds of girl Olympic runners is R. R. Knudson's Fox Running. Although they are rivals, each is the other's inspiration and exact complement in personality and ability. Each girl, too, is heroic and not heroic in her own way. Several anthologies of real life athletes in profile that students enjoy and find inspiration from are Winners Never Quit by Phil Pepe (a little dated but includes exciting incidents from lives of men like Mickey Mantle, Johnny Unitas, and Jerry Kramer); Women Who Win by Francene Sabin (which tells the stories of fourteen female athletes such as Billie Jean King, Janet Lynn, and Cathy Rigby); Breaking In, edited by Lawrence T. Lorimer (which includes nine first person accounts of winning and losing by people like Spencer Hayward, Anthony Quinn, and Althea Gibson). Girl Sports by Karen Folger Jacobs describes what it's like to train, to compete, to win, and to lose for girls between the ages of 9 and 17 who are not such well known names.

Handicapped youngsters--physically or mentally--often develop special qualities of heroism that the rest of us can learn from. Some books that consider the problems of physical handicaps are Harriet May Savitz's On The Move, Robin Brancato's Winning, and Joni by Joni Earekson, all books about wheelchair victims. Nicholasa Mohr tells how a dwarf is a giant in courage in In Nueva York, while two other books describe the lonely heroism of the deaf--A Single Light by Maia Wojciechowska and In This Sign by Joanne Greenberg. Jaap ter Haar describes in The World of Ben Lighthart the heroic qualities of a young sports-minded boy whose life changes completely when a tragic accident blinds him.

Mental retardation demands qualities of heroism, too. Louise Albert's But I'm Ready To Go takes the reader into the mind of Judy, a retarded girl tempted to take the easy way and retreat into her own world, depending on others to care for her. But with help from those who love her, she gains courage and steps into life--at first hesitatingly and then confidently, ready to share her special gifts with others.

Nervous breakdowns and more serious mental illness are a reflection of society, and young people, too, fall victim to this affliction. It takes a special brand of heroism to return to "normal" life following such an experience. An early novel with this theme is Hanna Green's I Never Promised You a Rose Garden. The anguish, humiliation, and confusion of life in the mental institution make a return to the outside world seem nearly impossible in this novel as well as in one with a similar theme by Jessie Schell, Sudina. Judith Guest's Ordinary People describes a teenage boy's struggle to get back into the mainstream of life while bearing the stigma of his recent return from nearly a year in a mental hospital. The effects of that struggle on himself and his parents are monumental but not completely unconquerable.

Until recently, death was a taboo topic in literature for teenagers. But a few years ago a flurry of books, most based on real life experiences, appeared that described the heroism of young people faced with terminal illness and how they became vividly alive in the face of their physical pain, mental anguish, and the indignities of disease. Some of these books include: Brian Piccolo, A Short Season by Jeannie Morris; Sunshine by Norma Klein; Death Be Not Proud by John Gunther; Doris Herald Lund's Eric; Marcia Friedman's The Story of Josh; John Arre's Message To My Daughter; and Ellen, A Short Life Long Remembered, by Rose Levit. Each of these young heroes leaves a legacy of love and a model of how to live life with exuberance, courage, and dignity.

One of the hardest battles teenagers fight that requires its own brand of heroism is the battle against peer pressure. Adolescents fear being different in spite of their noisy "lip service" to nonconformity. Robert Cormier's The Chocolate War tells how Jerry Renault becomes a hero when he refuses to be intimidated by the Vigils, a secret school society. There's nothing particularly planned or noble on Jerry's part initially--he just thinks he'd rather not do what the group demands. He stands fast in his decision in spite of the secret society's violent threats and actions. The book's first sentence about football--"They murdered him."--forshadows the game of life with its violence and the kind of heroism required to play that game. Even though the novel concludes with Jerry's becoming the victim instead of the hero, students admire the stand Jerry takes and his adherence to that stand.

Crisis situations do demand heroes or perhaps they bring out heroic qualities in otherwise "ordinary people." But there is a different and perhaps even a greater kind of heroism involved simply in living everyday life in all its boredom, mundaneness, and anonymity. Carl Sandburg wrote: "These are heroes then--among the plain people--heroes, did you say? And why not? They give all they've got and ask no questions and take what comes and what more do you want?"[1]

A person with heroic qualities in everyday life is a person with the courage to jump into life with both feet. And that person need not be an adult or even a teenager. Heroes know no chronological age. In Mister God, This is Anna by an author who identifies himself simply as "Fynn," a young man takes a six-year-old girl for his "hero": he calls his acquaintance with her "the high peak of adventure"...a friendship that "was no casual knowing; it required total application. For I knew her on her own terms, the way she demanded to be known, from the inside first." (pp. 1-2) Fynn admires and is excited and continually surprised by Anna because of her total involvement in life, her unending courageous commitment to life, and her curiosity about it: "...her questions and proddings were like the waves breaking on the seashore; as one rolled up the sandy shore, so millions of others were being formed far out at sea...." (p. 70)

Anna talks with Fynn about the need for courage. If one is to acquire courage, one cannot have fear; and to release oneself from fear, according to what Anna says, one must be willing to trust. And to trust, she says, one must "move out of the 'I'm the center of all things' and let something or someone take over... let Mister God move in...."(p. 49)

Parents complain that too many of today's books for teenagers portray adults in general and parents in particular as antiheroes rather than the heroes some think parents should be. But there are some excellent literary works that do give young people admirable adult hero-models. Among these are Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine*, Ernest Gaines' *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, Robert Newton Peck's *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, Jeff Fields' *A Cry of Angels*, Mildren D. Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, and Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*.

According to Peck's *A Day No Pigs* ..., a father's first duty is to feed his family. Papa must make a painful decision when he kills son Rob's pet pig so the family can eat--and Rob has to help his father. The lesson is an awesome one, and when the deed is accomplished, Papa tells Rob: "That's what being a man is all about, boy. It's just doing what's got to be done." (p. 129) And in Potok's book, Rev Saunders explains to his son that "A man must fill his life with meaning.... It is hard work to fill one's life with meaning...."(p. 205)

What, then, is a hero? A hero rises above the ordinary to become first a "survivor" in the game of life. A hero combines the qualities of courage, determination, curiosity, desire, zest, and endurance, together with a willingness to pay the price, a willingness to risk all he or she has and is. A hero is one who lives life but who doesn't hold onto it so tight he can't let go for a nobler cause. A hero is a person who can win--but who knows that he did not win all alone and that having won, his work does not end but grows ever larger. A hero is a person who can fail and get up and start over and never quit trying. A hero may be "born" or a hero may be "made," but whichever way it happens, it begins with a spark somewhere inside the spirit.

And where are the heroes today? Why they're right here--all around us--in real life and in books that show us real life. All we have to do is look around and see them. And putting books with real heroes in the hands of teenagers links them to what may well be their "lifeline."

FOOTNOTE

1. From *At Your Own Risk*, Holt's Impact Series, ed. by Charlotte K. Brooks, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968, pp. vi-viii.

Getting Together With Books — A Mini Unit For and About Minorities

Patricia Phelan

Good books are a wonderful way to help people get together. My classes are composed of Black, Mexican American, Pan-Asian and a few Anglo high school juniors and seniors who have experienced little success with reading and writing. When we first met each other in September, it was clear that they did not trust me and I did not know how to show them that I was trustworthy. In this setting, I am a minority by age, color (white), and education; they are all part of a majority in this community. We became friends before the end of the semester, and I learned that "minority" can mean so much more than ethnic identity. This experience has shown me that being a minority means being short-changed as an American, not offered the same quality living available to a majority of our population. From this point of view, minorities are people who have been thrown away--given less than the majority in education, housing, jobs and expectations--young people or old people. In class, my task has been to present language arts materials and activities which will interest minority students and lead to a sense of successful accomplishment, showing them that they are indeed capable of reading, writing and discussing ideas competently and enjoyably.

As part of a school-wide emphasis on reading improvement, our principal made money available to those of us who wished to purchase paperback books for class use. I saw this as a chance to combine reading as pleasure/assignment, to widen students' concepts of minorities, and to integrate writing and oral language activities with the reading. I wanted books that dealt with or would appeal to minority students in such a way as to encourage these reluctant readers to relate to the characters, to talk and listen to each other's ideas, and to participate in activities which would make connections between the story and their own lives. In creating assignments, I chose activities involving writing, discussion, art work, and music, structured so that everyone would experience success.

This three-week mini-unit suggests some books which my classes enjoyed, assignments which they completed willingly, and a collection of ideas for culminating activities upon completion of the books. The unit proved to be pleasurable for the students and for me; we all became better acquainted as we shared ideas about the books during the reading. The experience brought us closer together. Here are the books, the procedures I used to introduce them, and the assignments which worked for us.

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BOOKS

I selected nine books as beginning titles to offer for the mini-unit. There are five copies of each title available so that students can work in small groups to do some of the assignments and so that they can share impressions of the same book with another reader. A few students may read more than one book during this three weeks, and some may wish to continue reading on their own when the unit is completed. All of the books have an easy reading level, are well written, and have something significant to say about being a minority and a human being in today's world. I had read all of the books and was familiar with their content. A supplementary list of other good books is included at the end of the unit.

I wanted these juniors and seniors to read a complete book, and I had the advantage of funds to purchase books that would be successful. There is no need to feel that minority students must read only about minority people, though I had a number of such books. In fact, one of my first surprises was which students chose which books. There seemed to be a wide range of interest outside of ethnic groupings. In widening students' understanding of minorities as people who have been short-changed but have survived, I chose books which have main characters who fight against seemingly hopeless odds to survive, achieve some goal, and eventually offer a contribution to society at large. I believe that every one of my students can do the same thing as the characters in those books. The procedures suggested here would probably work equally well with any books of your choice or with anthologies which you have available.

Bonham, Frank. _Chief_. (207 pages) reading level grade 6-7. Henry Crowfoot, hereditary "chief" of the Santa Rosa Indians, wants to finish high school and become a lawyer. Henry finds some old tribal documents which show that half of the city still belongs to his tribe. He finds someone to investigate and help him fight for his people.

Bonham, Frank. _Hey, Big Spender!_ (155 pages) reading level grade 6-7. Cool Hankins is a young Black man living in a large city ghetto. His friend, an old derelict named "Breathing Man," asks Cool to help him give away his secret savings of half a million dollars to people who really need money. Cool discovers that giving money away presents serious problems.

Bonham, Frank. _Viva Chicano_. (160 pages) reading level grade 6-7. Keeny is a teenage Chicano who already has a police record. Neighbors say that he pushed his little brother out of the apartment house window. Feeling that no one will believe he is innocent, Keeny runs away.

Donovan, John. _Remove Protective Coating A Little At A Time_. (92 pages) reading level grade 7. Fourteen-year-old Harry, the only child of an unloving middle class white family, has never experienced much success or affection in his life. One day he meets Amelia, an old woman derelict who lives by scavenging for food in garbage cans and begging for money when she has to. She teaches Harry to love life.

Lester, Julius. To Be A Slave. (160 pages) reading level grade 9. This book is a collection of memories of Black slaves and ex-slaves--true accounts of their daily living in their own worlds. The entries are grouped around subjects of capture, auction, plantation life, resistance to slavery, and emancipation.

Lipsyte, Robert. The Contender. (136 pages) reading level grade 8. Alfred Brooks is a proud Black teenager living in Harlem who wants to be a real contender. His fight manager tells him, "It's the climbing that makes the man." Alfred finds this true as he is forced to choose between friendship and honesty, hard work and easy money.

McCannon, Dindga. Peaches. (91 pages) reading level grade 7. Growing up in a tough world--Harlem--Peaches and her girlfriends get into a lot of trouble. Her determination to survive and become an artist keep her from giving up.

O'Brien, Robert. Z for Zachariah. (188 pages) reading level grade 8. Anne Burden, a white girl, is the only survivor of a nuclear holocaust, living on a small farm. One day a sinister man in a radiation suit comes looking for survivors. Anne is afraid to trust him.

O'Dell, Scott. The Black Pearl. (96 pages) reading level grade 6. A young Baja fisherman longs to be successful and famous. He finds a great pearl but, in so doing, brings a curse upon his whole village.

PROCEDURE

The first day, hold up the book and tell students something about it or read a paragraph or two. Do this for all nine books. Ask students to write down a first and second choice. This form helped me keep track of the books:

Name ______________________________________
Period ____________________

Please write a 1 by your first choice, a 2 by your second choice.

Bonham, Chief
Bonham, Hey, Big Spender!
Bonham, Viva Chicano
Donovan, Remove Protective Coating a Little At A Time
Lester, To Be A Slave
Lipsyte, The Contender
McCannon, Peaches
O'Brien, Z for Zachariah
O'Dell, The Black Pearl

I circled the book and wrote the copy number I gave to the student. I collected these slips each period in order to pass the books out to the right people the next day.

The second day, distribute books according to student choices as much as possible. Tell students that they cannot change books or interrupt readers until the end of the reading time. All reading will be done during the first half hour of class and no books may be checked out because other classes are reading the same books. Language arts activities will be based on the particular book that each student is reading. At the end of the half hour of reading, suggest that anyone who wants to change to a different book should do so today or tomorrow, no later than that. Give assignment #1, then collect the books at the end of the period with the book choice forms. Students who have been absent will have to choose from those titles left after the other students have their books. I was afraid that this procedure would be a hopeless hassle, but I wanted to keep track of the books; in practice the procedure proved simple and workable.

ASSIGNMENTS

Each day we read at the beginning of the period for thirty minutes. I used this reading time to read widely myself in order to find more books to recommend. At the close of the reading, I gave an assignment, in the order listed by number, one each day. These suggested language arts activities would fit almost any book and are intended as a general guide to be adapted to your own needs. Encourage students to explore ways in which the characters in their books are truly minorities, the problems they have to face, how they deal with their world, whether their choices are the right ones. Sharing ideas about books read in common is a rich experience, both for the students and the teacher. I learned about them and about myself during this mini-unit.

If this format grows tedious, omit the reading for a day or two. Other classroom activities will fit in the time, because many of the assignments are short. There are eleven assignments for eleven days, though some may require more than one day to complete, and a wide variety of choices for doing a final project when the book is finished.

ASSIGNMENT #1

Write the title, author, and copyright date, and tell about the setting of the book as far as you can determine it from today's reading.

ASSIGNMENT #2

Describe one character you have met in the story at the end of today's reading.

ASSIGNMENT #3

Write the title, copyright date, total number of pages in the book, the page number on which you are reading right now. Tell whether you like the book so far, giving reasons for your opinion. Tell what is happening in the book at the place where you stopped reading today.

ASSIGNMENT #4

Study spelling and vocabulary words which have been selected from the books you are reading as a class. You will be tested on these as the teacher directs. (The list contained approximately two words from each of the nine books. A teacher may wish to have students make up a list each week if you prefer a weekly spelling and vocabulary study.)

ASSIGNMENT #5

Read aloud a whole paragraph that you like to the person sitting next to you. Discuss with this person what you like in the paragraph and why you chose it. Share ideas about the books you are reading. Write a paragraph in which you summarize what you found out about your book and the other person's book in this exercise.

ASSIGNMENT #6

Find a picture from a magazine which will make a good illustration for a scene in the book. Glue the picture on a piece of construction paper, 8½ x 11, folded like a book if you like. On the front, place the picture, the book title, and the name of the author. Fasten a half sheet of lined paper inside. Summarize the scene from the book which is pictured on the front. Tell who the characters are, where they are, and what is happening. Do not tell the end of the story, only this one scene. Sign your name. When finished, tack your "book" on the bulletin board. (The teacher will need to have some old magazines available in the room, along with construction paper, scissors, and glue.)

ASSIGNMENT #7

Do request reading in groups of two; work with someone who is reading the same or a different book. Begin with a paragraph at the beginning of the chapter where you are reading right now. Both of you read the same one or two paragraphs silently. Then one person, without referring to the book, answers questions asked by the person who has the book open. Ask questions which call for recall of facts and also questions which require explanations or opinions. For example: Who was going? What happened? Why did she go? Do you agree with what she decided? Then reverse roles of questioner and answerer, using the other student's book or the same one. (This procedure encourages comprehension through formation of good questions.)

ASSIGNMENT #8

Find and bring to class a piece of music which will represent a character, the theme, or the problem which characters in the book have to face. Work together with others who are reading the same book so that you can agree and bring one piece of music only for each book, if you wish. If the music has lyrics, provide a copy of these on a ditto so the whole class can look on while listening. (As an example, the teacher might use Simon and Garfunkle's "Bookends" to show the mood that often accompanies old age and to provide a contrast for the character of Amelia in Remove Protective Coating a Little at a Time.)

ASSIGNMENT #9

Write one paragraph or more in which you choose a character and tell how this person is like someone you know. Tell whether you would like to have this character for a friend, and what you like and don't like about the character as a person.

ASSIGNMENT #10

Write one paragraph or more in which you choose a problem that someone in the story has to solve or a decision someone has to make. Tell how this is similar to something in your own life. Discuss how you handled your decision compared to the way the story character handled his or hers. What do you think will be, or what were, the results of your decision compared to that of the story character?

ASSIGNMENT #11

Use plastic clay to shape a symbol, object, or character from your story. After this is done, write one paragraph about your clay creation with the book title at the top of the paper. (Display these in the room by placing the clay shape on each paper so students can compare their ideas about the books with others' creations.)

By now many of the students have finished reading their books and are ready to do a final project. I used poster board and made a poster of assignments, one each for these titles: LETTERS, HOROSCOPE, PICTURES, TAPES, QUOTATIONS, and VISUALIZING. When they had finished reading the book, students worked alone or together on one project of their choice from those presented on the posters. These same posters might be used with other books read during the semester as well.

LETTERS

A. Write a letter in which you become one of the characters. Write this letter as you, the character, to another character in the story, telling this person something you wanted to say to him or her in the book but didn't, or explaining why you did something in the story that he or she didn't understand. (Include the name of the book, the author and your name.)
B. Write two letters for a DEAR ABBY column--the first letter is from you as a character in the book, in which you ask for advice for your problem. In the second letter you are ABBY; write your advice about what to do back to the character who wrote the first letter. (Include the name of the book, the author and your name.)

HOROSCOPE

Choose one of the characters from the book. Make up a zodiac sign of this character, explaining all of the traits which this person in the book has and why this is a good sign for the character. (Include the name of the book, the author, and your name.)

PICTURES

A. Make a poster using pictures from magazines, newspapers, or your own drawings in which you illustrate characters, happenings, problems or the theme of the book. Work the name of the book and author into the poster. (Include your name.)
B. Make a booklet of pictures or drawings which show some of the scenes, characters or happenings in the story. The name of the book, author, and your name should be somewhere on the cover.
C. Make a scrapbook of pictures of the main characters in the book, writing under each as though they were creating this scrapbook. It could be pictures of the characters, happenings in their lives, dreams they have which do or don't come true. The title, author, and your name should be on the front cover.

TAPES

A. Make a tape in which you and another person read some dialogue from the book, showing a scene which is important because it represents a major problem for the character or is especially interesting to you as a reader. If the dialogue isn't all written in the book word for word, you can make some up which you think those characters would say. The title, author and your name(s) should be on the tape.
B. Tape record a reading of one scene in which you don't like the way the character in the story handled something. Rewrite the scene and tape it the way you think this person should have acted. (Include the title, author, and your name on the tape.)
C. Tape record a different ending to the story than the one you read. (Include the title, author, and your name on the tape.)

QUOTATIONS

A. Make a collection of at least three quotations from the book which are meaningful to you. Include in your collection at least two poems or song lyrics which relate in some way to the quotations. Tell why you included these. (Include the title, author, and your name.)
B. Choose one quotation from the book. Tell a five-year old child what the book is about, and explain what the quotation means. (Include the title, the author, and your name.)

VISUALIZING

A. Imagine that you are making this book into a movie. Write a short summary of the plot of the movie version. Tell who you think should be the main actors and actresses to play the different parts. (Include book title, author, and your name.)

B. Write the opening scene for a movie made of your book. Tell how it should look on the screen (the scene as you would see it), who would be in the first scene (actors, actresses), and what would happen in the opening. (Include the book title, author, and your name.)

CONCLUSION

Planning this unit was a challenge to me. Would the students be willing to read the books? What if I had not chosen titles that would interest them? Would they be willing to do the assignments? Would they all experience some success? Would they be willing to talk to each other and to me about the books? In short, would the unit be worth the time and money that went into it? For my classes and for me, it proved to be a fine experience. Somehow, this unit resulted in a building of trust between all of us in the room. I don't know whether this was due to the choice of subject matter in the books, the assignments which encouraged students to relate to the reading, or the structure of the unit. which demanded full "time-on-task" during the class period. There are still the same problems which minorities have to face in our society, whether they are the elderly, unwanted children, ethnic groups. The more we share ideas openly and honestly, the better chance we have to build bridges between the frustrations of now and the expectations of tomorrow.

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKS

Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*
Babbitt, Natalie. *Tuck Everlasting*
Bradbury, Bianca. *Love Is Never Enough*
Carson, Dale. *The Plant People*
Cleaver, Vera and Bill. *Where the Lilies Bloom* and *The Mimosa Tree*
Head, Ann. *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones*
Myers, Walter Dean. *It Ain't All for Nothin'*; *Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff*; *Brainstorm*
Neufeld, John. *Edgar Allen*
Parks, Gordon. *A Choice of Weapons*
Rhode, Evan. *The Prince of Central Park*
Southall, Ivan. *Hill's End*
Wood, Phyllis. *Song of the Shaggy Canary*

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Undertaker's Gone Bananas by Paul Zindel.
Bantam, 1979. 153 pp. $1.95.

To his lengthening list of curious titles, Paul Zindel has added this whimsical murder mystery involving one mortician and two teenagers. Appropriately surnamed Hulka, the mortician piques the suspicions of Bobby Perkins and Lauri Geddes when he moves into their high-rise and seems sinister. His wife is "a giant Barbie doll" who is not long for this world; neither is his girlfriend. Hulka does both women grave misdeeds apparent only to Bobby and Lauri, who unabashedly spy on him and eventually expose him. Bobby is a 15-year-old eccentric, brave and sagacious; Lauri is a 14-year-old girl who works hard to overcome a severe emotional trauma that occurred before she met Bobby. Their relationship enriches and informs the novel, for as they take on dangerous, adult responsibilities, Lauri confronts her personal anguish with Bobby's help. Their commitment to justice and to each other inspires the novel which is as creative as it is moral. Zindel's wry title heralds a highly readable story that, despite its seemingly grisly plot, is comfortably empty of the macabre. It will appeal strongly to middle-school students and their teachers.

Reviewed by Mary Anne Zak, Suffield High School, Suffield, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

A Father Every Few Years by Alice Bach.
Dell, 1979. 128 pp. $1.50.

Tim Cartwright is an eleven year old entering adolescence. This is a hard enough task without the problems Tim faces that compounded the anxieties of his situation. Tim's father had deserted his mother, Melanie, when Tim was very young. Later Melanie marries Max. Instead of providing the stability Tim longs for, Max is filled with empty promises, exciting dreams that never become reality, and unfounded hopes. Still he is a father to Tim, and Tim takes what Max gives him in his own unpredictable and humorous way. Max, however, walks out leaving Tim once again with a shattered family. Tim convinces most of his friends that he is glad to be rid of Max, but secretly he longs for Max to return and re-establish the family unity. Elaborate schemes are devised by Tim and a few of his close confidants in a vain attempt to locate Max and beg for his return. As Tim begins to recognize the futility of his efforts, he begins to mature and accept some of the hard blows that life deals to people. This is a very serious subject but the book is not depressing. On the contrary, Bach is able to sensitively capture one young boy's acceptance of things that cannot be changed and portray one large step he takes towards manhood.

Reviewed by Christine DeLozier, formerly of Westbrook Junior-Senior High School, Westbrook, CT.

The Place of Young Adult Fiction in One High School Reading Center

Marion D. Bradley

Adolescent literature is used in the reading center at North Branford High School in many different ways for many different purposes. Young adult fiction has been used to turn students on to reading, as a transition to the classics, for modified bibliotherapy, as material to improve basic reading skills, as material to be used with the Shadowscope for speed reading, by poorer readers as the source for acceptable book reports in various history and social studies classes, and to encourage students to form the habit of purchasing books.

Before going into more specifics, it is necessary to give some background information about the reading program at North Branford High School. All types of reading instruction from remedial through PSAT/SAT prep and speed reading are available in this elective program. As all instruction is individualized, classes are heterogeneously grouped and small. This wide range of needs and abilities dictates a variety of materials.

The room library devoted to young adult fiction is the outgrowth of the need to have interesting supplementary materials readily available when students wanted something to read. Perhaps the first pressure for outside reading materials came from students looking for books to use for history book reports. An arrangement was worked out whereby if I suggested titles for specific students, these were accepted by the teacher even if they did not appear on a reading list. A few of the many obvious and not so obvious titles that have proven valuable for these purposes include Armstrong's *Sounder*, Hunt's *Across Five Aprils*, Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, Borland's *When the Legends Die*, Knudsen's *Fox Running*, and Rawls' *Where the Wild Fern Grows*.

Platt's *hey dummy*, MacCracken's *Lovey* (though not fiction), Savitz's *On the Move*, and Levitt's *Ellen: A Short Life Long Remembered* have proven suitable outside reading for sociology and psychology courses. Not all of these titles are easy to read but then not all students seeking books are poor readers. All the titles hold the reader's interest and I try to match reader and book. In no sense are the above lists of titles complete but rather include typical titles.

Before going any further, let me say that I read every book before it is put on the shelf. I find this is the only way I can match reader and stories. While this may take time, it is necessary. Students quickly know if I have read a book and really enjoyed it. They are also much quicker to come back and borrow other books if they enjoyed the first one.

Ms. Bradley has been a reading teacher and a history teacher as well as a newspaper editor; she is presently Chair of the English Department at North Branford (CT) High School.

The need for book report materials was an early factor in building up the room library, but the second force was the need to have books that poor readers could graduate to after finishing several of the titles in the Action Libraries by Scholastic. While perhaps not usually thought of as young adult fiction, the Action books contain interesting titles ranging from those relevant to daily living to science fiction and mystery. None is written on any higher than a fourth grade reading level. For many poor readers in our school, the first pleasure book they have ever read from cover to cover is from this series. After achieving success, they are ready to push on to bigger and better things. Many popular adolescent novels are short and are not written on a difficult level so provide the perfect transition. Blume and Hinton, for example, are popular with most readers while Zindel and Kerr are apt to be popular only with more able readers.

I will usually suggest that students using the Shadowscope, a pacing device used with books to increase reading speed, select from the young adult fiction collection for practice materials. The books are usually swift moving, easy to read, and ideally suited for the purpose. I try to get the college bound students to move on to more classical selections for outside reading. Several classics titles are available in paperback as these look less like textbooks.

Students are allowed to sign out books for an indefinite period. I encourage students to select a book to read when they have completed their assignments. I also deliberately plan many students' work so they have time to read in class. A period of free reading is given as a reward for a goal reached, and often the book started in class is signed out to be finished at home.

Sometimes with poorer readers I use young adult fiction instead of prepared materials to build comprehension. I am more apt to discuss the day's reading orally than to assign written work. Free teachers' guides including lesson plans and exercises for many titles are available from publishers. These can be of great help to the teacher using a single selection with a large class.

Small classes enable a teacher to get to know the students, and often when students ask for a "good book to read" they are looking for answers as well as entertainment. Divorce, for example, is increasing and I've included several titles dealing with aspects of this problem. Examples include Klein's Taking Sides, Burchard's A Quiet Place, Oppenheimer's One Step Apart, and Kerr's Love Is a Missing Person and The Son of Someone Famous. As divorce is only one facet of life covered in these books, they are of wide interest. Pfeffer's The Beauty Queen and its follow-up, Marly, The Kid, are examples of books that deal with parent-child conflicts, with the need to be one's own person, as well as with divorce. If I have any inkling that a student has any specific problems or concerns, I will be sure to include a book dealing with this type of problem among the three or four I suggest.

I have, however, brought Bloom's Deenie to the attention of students either directly or indirectly affected by scoliosis. I bought Sherburne's Why Have The Birds Stopped Singing? for a specific student, an epileptic. She read it and then had her mother read it, for the book said things that she had been unable to communicate to her mother. Usually I am more subtle. The list of titles could go on and on. There are stories dealing with the death of a parent, the suicide of a parent, drugs, and many on the theme of self-realization. There isn't room to cover them all here.

You may wonder where all these books come from. Except for the Action Libraries, none have been purchased by the Board of Education. A few have been donated, a few scrounged from dealers at conventions, a few purchased at used paperback book stores and at tag sales, a couple obtained as review copies, but most of them come from paperback book clubs. Xerox, Scholastic, and Troll all sponsor clubs and I have used all three. All allow teachers to get free books for "points" based on sales to students. In addition, Troll gives three books of its choosing with each order. In addition to the "free" books, I usually end up purchasing one or two.

While I don't think teachers should have to purchase their own teaching materials, my arrangement has certain advantages. I own the books. If after purchasing one I think it is a mistake I simply throw it away. (This has only happened twice: the first book had characters that found it impossible to converse in anything but gutter language--a little bit is o.k. but not in every sentence. The second involved an eighth grade girl who was extremely active sexually. I didn't finish either to find out if there were any socially redeeming factors.)

I am not hamstrung by purchase orders, deciding in December what I want for the following September, or by administrative red tape. If a title becomes available in a book club and I want it, I get it. Book club prices, by the way, are usually substantially lower than in other outlets. The addition of new titles each month keeps the students looking over the shelves and reading.

Many of the ways that young adult fiction is used in our reading center are easily adapted for use in the regular classroom. Many of these books are shallow, rather like a TV show with little time spent in characterization. Others are well written and may even last. I haven't even mentioned several titles that are favorities of mine and the students. That could easily fill another article. The one thing that we must keep in mind is that while young adult fiction can be the means to get young people reading, it shouldn't be the end.

BOOK CLUBS

Paperback Book Clubs (Xerox), Box 1195, Columbus, Ohio 43272.
Scholastic, 904 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632.
Troll Book Clubs, Mahwah, N.J. 07430.

Book Clubs, Bye Bye

Philip M. Connors

Tired of waiting three to five weeks for book club orders to arrive and disappointed with the selection of books being offered, I decided to do something about it. With the cooperation and initial financing of my principal, James Mahoney, and the advice and assistance of Paul Newth, manager of a local book store, the BOOK NOOK was born in November of 1978.

WHAT IT IS

What exactly is the BOOK NOOK? In reality it is a 4' x 8' sheet of plywood bolted to the wall in the English department office. The plywood was stained, and clam shell molding was added to give it a touch of class. Paperback book racks, loaned to me by Mr. Newth at the Enfield Book & Card Shop, were bolted to the plywood, and voila! The BOOK NOOK came into being.

There is space in the racks for five copies of 80 different titles. I have since added a free standing book rack which holds 20 additional titles. Seldom do I stock the full five copies of a book. Generally, I order and stock them in multiples of three.

SELECTING BOOKS

As mentioned previously, one of my objections to the book clubs was their selections. I got frustrated sending in orders for Marmaduke, Beetle Baily, and other cartoon and puzzle books. Although the clubs offered some good adolescent novels, I found the majority of the ordering being sent out by Kennedy Junior High students was for the non-reading type of book.

Therefore, my goal for the BOOK NOOK was to offer only good adolescent fiction mixed in with some adolescent non-fiction. There are no cartoon type books, puzzle books, or for that matter "classic" books available at the NOOK. The philosophy at the English department at Kennedy is to get kids to enjoy reading and to encourage them to read frequently. We believe the best way to do that is to make short, readable, adolescent fiction easily available to them; that is what the BOOK NOOK does.

Having been hooked on adolescent literature by Don Gallo at Central Connecticut State College several years ago, I had read many worthwhile novels for junior high school students. A number

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Phil Connors is Chairperson of the English Department at J. F. Kennedy Junior High School in Enfield, CT, as well as Chair of the Membership Committee of the Connecticut Council of Teachers of English.

of these became my first purchases for the empty BOOK NOOK shelves. In addition I solicited suggestions from the 90 teachers at Kennedy and also encouraged students who had read books they enjoyed to give me the author and title for possible adoption.

To some degree, I must admit, censorship does exist at the BOOK NOOK. Since I am encouraging students to buy these books and take them home, I have avoided stocking any titles which I felt would generate substantial parental objection. Two such titles that are not sold at the store are Judy Blume's Forever and the frequently read Go Ask Alice. My feeling is there is a more than an adequate supply of excellent adolescent novels that are not overly controversial, and it is quite easy to keep the hundred slots in the book racks filled with them.

During that first year 343 adolescent novels were sold. In its second year of operation the BOOK NOOK distributed 534 titles to happy readers, and I am hopeful of topping the 600 mark in 1980-81.

It has never been the goal of the BOOK NOOK to make money. Rather, it has been to encourage kids to read and to show them that reading is fun. Because profit is not a major concern, I purchase all the books for the store from the Enfield Book & Card Shop located at a nearby mall. The manager allows me a 20% discount. The average "profit" on a book sold is between 10¢ and 20¢. Although small this cushion has allowed the BOOK NOOK to be self-sufficient since the initial $150 donation from the student activity fund back in November of 1978.

I could receive a 25% or 30% discount on the books if I ordered directly from any of the various book wholesalers, but I have found it to be much more convenient to use the local book store. I can pick up the phone and order 2 or 200 titles from Mr. Newth, and he will have them for me within three days.

INFORMING STUDENTS

Publicity is most important for getting the books out of the racks and into the hands of adolescent readers. During the past two years I have tried various ideas for publicizing and generating interest in books. Using the school's public address system is an easy and useful way to inform students about the BOOK NOOK. I write up announcements of one kind or another two or three times a week. These are read over the public address system in the morning and the afternoon along with other school business. Using the P.A. system alone, I was able to sell 55 copies of Miracle on Ice, the story of the USA Olympic hockey team, in a period of two weeks. During the same time period the local book store at the mall sold only two copies of the book.

Promotional items have also helped to generate sales, especially during the usually slow spring months of April and May. Using posters which I garnered free from book clubs and other sources, I offered one free to anyone who bought three books at the same time. Copies of the available posters adorned the walls of the BOOK NOOK for several weeks. Through the cooperation of Mr. Paul Pastore in the graphic arts department, I was also able to offer a free John F. Kennedy Junior High book mark to each student who purchased a book. The book marks were printed up on heavy stock in six different colors, and, since it was excess stock from other jobs, the cost was practically nothing.

This past year I decided to publish a one page, two-sided, monthly newsletter. It was called the BOOK NOOK NEWS and was put out at the beginning of each month. Every issue included the current "best seller list," short articles about authors of adolescent fiction, information about new books available, and a "droodle of the month" modeled after the famous Roger Price cartoons. Also included were four or five short summaries of books that were for sale at the NOOK. Usually I chose books which I knew to be good but for one reason or another were not selling very well.

The master copy of the news was typed, then combined in a past-up with press-on lettering. I then made enough Thermofax masters to give a set to each English teacher, who in turn ran off enough copies to distribute to each of his or her students. I found the newsletter to be an excellent device for keeping the BOOK NOOK in the public eye. This coming year the graphic arts department is going to print the BOOK NOOK NEWS on off set so it will look even more professional, and it will eliminate the need for teachers to have to run off the masters.

In April a baby mouse was captured in the English office. I decided to keep her, dubbed her B.N. (for BOOK NOOK) and encouraged students over the P.A. system to come down and see the BOOK NOOK's mascot. The last two issues of the BOOK NOOK NEWS included a short anecdote about B.N. For instance, one issue told of her interest in reading, her two favorite titles being Of Mice and Men and I Am the Cheese!

I have printed up an alphabetical list of all book titles along with their authors and net prices. These lists are distributed to each student three times a year in English classes. Because space is limited, I generally discontinue books that have not sold well over a three or four month period. If a book has sold fewer than five copies, it is not doing well enough to keep it on the racks. The lists the students receive reflect the changes that occur periodically, and the newsletter also keeps everyone aware of the new offerings.

I am able to return any discontinued books for credit, but usually I will offer the books for sale at half price. Even though a loss is incurred on such sales, I would rather see the book get into someone's hands than have it be sent back to the warehouse.

In the English office where the BOOK NOOK is located, I try to keep many book related items on the walls to make the setting visually exciting. Dell publishes posters illustrating many of the Laurel-leaf titles as well as individual posters on different

BOOK NOOK NEWS

John F. Kennedy Jr. High School October 1980 Vol. II No. 1

BOOK NOOK BEST SELLERS

Although it is really too early to have established a best seller list, certain books are already emerging as candidates for the list once it is established next month. So far the following titles have been popular with the September book buyers:

- A.G. Graebner H.S. Handbook
- Are You in the House Alone?
- Can You Sue Your Parents for Malpractice?
- Secrets of the Shopping Mall
- Seventeenth Summer
- Tex
- That Was Then, This is Now
- Tina Gogo
- Toby Lived Here (preview on back)

FREE BOOK OFFER

This year marks the beginning of the third year of operation for the BOOK NOOK. Located in an out-of-the-way spot in the building, the book store has managed to sell over 900 teen-age novels to the students and teachers of JFK. The final total sold last school year was 534. This year the BOOK NOOK's goal will be to top the 600 mark.

As an incentive and reward to all you book buyers and readers out there, the BOOK NOOK is making a very special offer. Anyone who purchases 10 books between September and June this year will be allowed to choose a free book from the tremendous selection available. Don't delay, hurry down today.

A SAD NOTE

B.N., the BOOK NOOK mouse, is no more. Sometime during the weekend of September 27, 28, she curled up in a corner of her little cage and died.

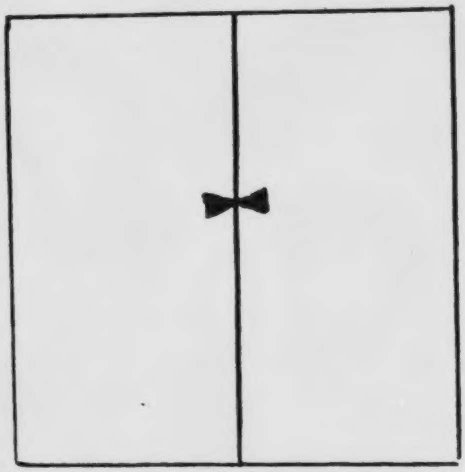
"B," as she was affectionately called by her friends, had become the mascot of the BOOK NOOK ever since her capture in the English department office last March 24.

Hopefully, we will find a suitable replacement for her and once more listen to the familiar turning of the exercise wheel in the now vacant cage.

Finding a new mouse mascot will be no easy task. Although B.N. was a tiny little creature, her emotional and promotional attachment to the BOOK NOOK was huge.

DROODLE OF THE MONTH

Can you identify what this is?
(Answer on back side of this page.)



HALF PRICE SALE

The BOOK NOOK opens the 1980-81 school year with a blockbuster sale. A selected group of books are being offered for half their cover prices. That means you can pick up dynamite books like A Day No Pigs Would Die, for a measly 65¢. Some of the other titles available are The Pigman, My Friend Flicka, Summer of My German Soldier, A Dog Named Wolf, Chloris & the Freaks, For the Love of Benji, A Summer of Fear, and many more.There are only single copies of many of these bargains, however, so act fast if you wish to take advantage of the unheard of savings.

Zanbanger

R.R. Knudson

Dell Laurel-leaf

Suzanne or "Zan" Hagen loves to play basketball, even if it means she has to play for Mrs. Butor's "polite" Generalettes team. Mrs. Butor, however, permanently benches her for being too aggressive.

With the help of her good friend Arthur Rinehart, Zan goes to court to try to legally get on to the boy's basketball team.

The courtroom air is stirring as Arthur stands to plead Zan's case to the jury. "My client," says Arthur, is facing this court only because she is a girl, and she pleads guilty to that."

As the drama unfolds, it eventually becomes Suzanne Hagen vs Robert E. Lee High School.

This is the second book in a set of three "Zan" stories. Next month the newest story, Zanboomer, will be previewed.

DROODLE ANSWER

Man in tuxedo who stood too close to the front of an elevator

Toby Lived Here

Hilma Wolitzer

Dell-Laurel leaf 1980

Toby's father died when she was 10. Her mother took care of her and her younger sister Anne for 3 years. Then, Toby's mother had a nervous breakdown and had to be hospitalized for an extended period of time.

Since none of the relatives would accept the responsibility of 2 young girls, Toby and Anne were placed in a foster home with Mr. & Mrs. Selwyn. The Selwyns had raised 12 foster children, and they gratefully took up the challenge of taking care of 2 girls who didn't want to be there.

This story will bring tears to your eyes, but it is one which you will long remember.

Marly the Kid

Susan Beth Pfeffer

Dell Laurel-leaf 1975

Marly Carson is "plain, plump, and pimply" according to one of her teachers. Unable to get along with her mother, fifteen year old Marly runs away to live with her father and his second wife, Sally.

Marly falls in love with her new English teacher, who looks like Robert Redford, and gets suspended from school because of a run-in she has with her social studies teacher.

authors. These are free. An enlarged "best seller" list is always on the wall, and I attempt to change it every two weeks. There is also a poster which reads, "The BOOK NOOK has sold ______ books this year." In the blank is a pad of scrap paper on which I magic marker the current number of books sold. This is changed after each sale.

BEST SELLERS

Following is a list of the best sellers at the BOOK NOOK for the past two years:

1978-79

1. That Was Then, This Is Now - Hinton
2. The Outsiders - Hinton
3. Are You In The House Alone? - Peck
4. The Cat Ate My Gymsuit - Danziger
5. Deenie - Blume
6. Rumblefish - Hinton
7. One Fat Summer - Lipsyte
8. Amityville Horror - Anson
9. The Pistachio Prescription - Danziger
10. Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret - Blume

1979-80

1. Miracle on Ice - N. Y. Times Staff
2. Killing Mr. Griffin - Duncan
3. Are You In The House Alone? - Peck
4. The Year Of The Jeep - Robertson
5. Say Hello To The Hitman - Bennett
6. Rumblefish - Hinton
7. That Was Then, This Is Now - Hinton
8. The Undertaker's Gone Bananas - Zindel
9. Amityville Horror - Anson
10. { The Cat Ate My Gymsuit - Danziger
    Emergency! 10-33 on Channel 11 - Milton }

KEEPING IT GOING

Although all the devices mentioned in this article have been successful in getting kids to read, there is no question that the most effective generator of book sales has been my own enthusiasm and knowledge of the books I sell. Most students find it quite difficult to select the right book for themselves. However, once they tell me what they like to read about, I can usually suggest a number of titles and tell them what the novels are like. Other teachers in the English department have found the same thing to be true. Kids are tremendously impressed by the fact that their teacher is reading the same books they are.

A school book store can be set up almost anywhere. The cost is slight but the rewards are huge. Who needs book clubs when you can have your own book store with a generous supply of good books readily available!

The Use of Fiction in Drug Education

Sari Feldman

Drug education programs in schools have been conducted primarily as units in health classes or as a series of special assemblies to focus on the problem of drug abuse. The drug education program has generally employed scare tactics, using a combination of factual information, behavioral outcomes, and side effects of each chemical.

BACKGROUND

These programs had built-in problems. The scare tactics were disproven by students' personal trial and error in the streets and the factual information became an experimentation "menu." Some programs also examined alternatives to drugs which would offer other ways to insight, natural highs, and methods for coping with personal problems. Unfortunately, alternatives were not usually as available as chemicals, and commercial advertising countered the argument that drugs could not solve all problems.

The current approach to drug education focuses on decision making, values clarification, and moral dilemmas. Although the successful drug education program should offer some elements of accurate factual information, alternatives to drugs, decision making, and values clarification, it is with the last two elements that the use of fiction can be a highly successful method and English classes a viable environment for presentation.

GOALS

Before a concrete program of bibliotherapy in the context of drug education can be designed, it is important to examine the past failures of drug education and to create realistic goals for this new program. The traditional objective has been to stop drug use and/or abuse in a given school. For the abuser, or individual with a serious drug related problem, knowing more about drugs is not likely to affect the personal situation. For the user or person who experiments to some degree, again there are more complicated motivations than just the desire to take drugs. Therefore, drug education should examine all aspects of drug taking behavior--including advertising, cultural and historical aspects, peer pressure, self-image, and parents or other adult role models--and the successful outcome should be better individual decision making and more responsible behavior.

THE ENGLISH TEACHER'S ROLE

The first step for the English teacher as facilitator of this process is to examine personal biases, attitudes towards

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Sari Feldman is a Young Adult Services Librarian in the Onondaga County Public Library, Syracuse, N.Y., and coauthor of Drugs: A Multimedia Sourcebook for Young Adults.

drugs, and drug taking behavior. This necessarily will include some self-education. It is important to remember that while some young adults may have their facts garbled, others know more than the teacher involved. Discussion should be a time for everyone to share knowledge; the facilitator whould be able to correct misinformation as well as be open to new ideas.

The following books can be helpful for teachers:

1. Brecher, Edward M. and the Editors of Consumer Reports. Licit and Illicit Drugs: The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens, and Marijuana--Including Caffeine, Nicotine, and Alcohol. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1972.
2. Cornacchi, Harold J. and Bentel, David J. Drugs in The Classroom: A Conceptual Model for School Programs. 2nd ed. St. Louis: C.V. Mosby Co., 1978.
3. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Alternative Pursuits for America's Third Century: A Resourcebook on New Perceptions, Processes and Programs with Implications for the Prevention of Drug Abuse. Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1975.
4. Purpel, David and Ryan, Kevin. Moral Education . . . It Comes with the Territory. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa, 1976.
5. Weil, Andrew. The Natural Mind: A New Way of Looking at Drugs and the Higher Consciousness. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972.

It is also helpful for a teacher to keep abreast of current trends in drug use among teenagers through magazine and newspaper articles.

SELECTING MATERIALS

Drug education materials, particularly those produced for young people, are beset with problems. Self-education and honest appraisals are the first steps teachers as well as students must take in winnowing out the unacceptable works. The following criteria are provided to aid in the selection process and to highlight the kinds of issues which complicate the drug education problem.

Evaluation Guidelines I

1. Facts and opinions are clearly differentiated.
2. Extreme positions such as "always" and "never" are avoided.
3. Authors admit their biases or personal positions.
4. Classifications of drugs are correct.
5. Drug effects are realistically portrayed.
6. Authors discriminate between drug use and misuse.
7. When discussing drug abuse, authors include legal drugs in the same context as illegal drugs.
8. Research is presented with an indication of the historical, political, and social climate in which it was conducted.

9. No attempt is made to indoctrinate, moralize, or push one value system.
10. Drug related problems, e.g. crime, are analyzed within the existing system and are not blamed on drug use.
11. All possible answers to drug abuse are examined, rather than one simple solution advocated.

Evaluation Guidelines II

1. Generally, items reflect young adult life situations and are of proper reading levels without condescending style or content.
2. Materials highlight the individual's responsibility in drug use.
3. By focusing on the individual, the material stimulates young adults to think about moral decisions, issues, and values.
4. A conscious effort is made to be sensitive to cultural diversity while avoiding sexist or racist overtones.
5. The material does not imply that only young adults use drugs.[1]

Few works can stand up to such rigorous criteria, particularly in the genre of young adult fiction. If the negative qualities of the novels are not overwhelming and can be recognized, a teacher can examine the author's failures with the students and thereby provide additional areas for discussion.

ADVANTAGES OF YA NOVELS

Classroom atmosphere may not be very conducive to a discussion about drugs. Young people may be too threatened by authority and peer pressure to honestly express opinions. The use of fiction in the classroom can help to overcome blocks to personal expression because it provides the protection of non-existant characters, an opportunity to live dilemmas vicariously, and a chance to make decisions without consequences. Teenagers enjoy knowing about other teenagers who have similar problems; they want to know that they are not alone, that there are many life choices and people who understand their personal crisis. Fiction also provides an entertaining format for introducing factual information. The young adult novel--although not always quality writing--is a necessary part of teenage popular culture.

Fiction selection in a drug education program is not limited to the novels dealing only with chemical use and abuse. Much realistic fiction which examines self-image and coping skills enable teachers and students to focus on the complex issues related to drug taking behavior. Body image seems to be a particular societal concern for adolescents. The ideal of youth as beauty and grace, the enviable time of resilient muscles and abounding energy, is a myth continually perpetuated in contemporary society. In reality, adolescents are trying to grow into their awkward new bodies. C.C. Poindexter, in C.C. Poindexter, at 6'1" and Bobby Marks, in One Fat Summer, weighing over 200 lbs. are two teenagers who take non-chemical routes to dealing with negative self-images.

It is important never to assume that individuals will make the connection between drug use and self-image. At some point the specific chemicals and the psychological-physical effects of drugs need to be explained in the classroom. Pamphlets, articles, and non-fiction books on drugs should be easily accessible to students and used to support the fictional works.

ACTIVITIES

Exercises that can provide opportunities for identifying the elements of a "drug culture" can be drawn from every day activities. Routine tasks such as viewing television or reading magazines can be enlightening when connected to a comprehensive and realistic education program. Students might keep a log of personal and media messages, i.e. pain relief commercials, which bombard them with chemical opportunities. Writing future advertising copy for "recreational" drugs or non-chemical solutions to problems such as headaches and weight loss would make interesting assignments.

The novels themselves need to be disected, looking at both the character's problems and the choice of solutions. After discussion, role plays are an effective and dramatic way of examining behavior. A student could choose a main character and change the major decision, i.e. Byron doesn't turn Mark over to the police for dealing drugs in That Was Then, This Is Now. A book might end differently, i.e. role playing Alice if she did not overdose and die at the conclusion of Go Ask Alice. Background to a story adds depth to a character's motivations. Students could dramatize The Loner, viewing Jenny's life as it might have been before hallucinogenics.

Good creative writing projects and important value considerations could stem from a look at utopias, either havens for drug use or drugless societies. To get started the class could share ideas of a perfect society, then visions could be personalized. The future that allows no limits on drugs could have Graham Samon, in I Can Stop Anytime I Want To, as a future airline pilot or surgeon. In the society of no drugs, Melissa, in Heads You Win, Tails I Lose, can seek new solutions to her weight problem.

CONCLUSION

Drug education contributes to the development of life skills and expands the options for contemporary teen-agers. As their lives are filled with daily drama, the education process must be creative, varied, and interactive to attract attention and have impact. Fiction is a learning tool that personalizes information but protects individual privacy. By identifying with characters and the situations of each novel the decision making process of students will be greatly enhanced.

The following alcohol and drug books are among the best available. The titles on self-image represent a limited list to help teachers get started.

ALCOHOLISM--ADULTS

Bonham, Frank. Chief. Gr. 6 up.
Neville, Emily. Garden Of Broken Glass. Gr. 5-9.
Snyder, Anne. First Step. Gr. 5-9.
Stolz, Mary. The Edge of Next Year. Gr. 7-9.
Summers, James. The Long Ride Home. Gr. 9 up.
Winthrop, Elizabeth. Knock, Knock, Who's There? Gr. 8 up.

ALCOHOLISM--TEENAGERS

Due, Linnea. High and Outside. Gr. 9 up.
Greene, Shep. The Boy Who Drank Too Much. Gr. 7 up.
Oppenheimer, Joan. The Lost Summer. Gr. 7 up.
Scoppettone, Sandra. The Late Great Me. Gr. 7 up.
Wagen, Robert. Sarah T: Portrait of a Teenage Alcoholic. Gr. 7 up.

OTHER DRUGS

Anonymous. Go Ask Alice. Gr. 7 up.
Bonham, Frank. Cool Cat. Gr. 7 up.
Bonham, Frank. Viva Chicano. Gr. 7 up.
Childress, Alice. A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich. Gr. 5-9.
Choen, Peter Zachary. Foal Creek. Gr. 5-9.
Garden, Nancy. The Loner. Gr. 7 up.
Hinton, S.E. That Was Then, This Is Now. Gr. 7 up.
Holland, Isabelle. Heads You Win, Tails I Lose. Gr. 7-10.
Holland, Ruth. The Room. Gr. 5-9.
Lipsyte, Robert. The Contender. Gr. 7-12.
Mathis, Sharon Bell. Teacup Full of Roses. Gr. 7 up.
Trivers, James. I Can Stop Any Time I Want. Gr. 7-12.

SELF-IMAGE

Blume, Judy. Deenie. Gr. 5-8.
Brooks, Jerome. The Testing of Charlie Hammelman. Gr. 6-9.
Conford, Ellen. And This Is Laura. Gr. 5-9.
Danziger, Paula. The Cat Ate My Gymsuit. Gr. 6-9.
Kerr, M. E. Dinky Hicker Shoots Smack. Gr. 6-9.
Lee, Robert. It's A Mile From Here to Glory. Gr. 5-8.
Lipsyte, Robert. One Fat Summer. Gr. 6-9.
Meyer, Carolyn. C. C. Poindexter. Gr. 6-9.
Peck, Richard. Representing Superdoll. Gr. 7 up.
Wersba, Barbara. Tunes For A Small Harmonica. Gr. 6-9.

FOOTNOTE

1. Sharon Ashbrenner and Sari Feldman, Drugs: A Multimedia Sourcebook for Young Adults, New York: Neal-Schuman, and Santa Barbara, CA: A.B.C. Clio, 1980, pp. xii-xiii.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Rebel on a Rock by Nina Bawden.
Dell, 1980. 174 pp. $1.50.

The summer she is twelve, red-haired Jo Popper vacations with her family in an old fortress city in the Mediterranean country of Ithaca. While she is there she learns a secret that could stop a revolution. As she deals with the information, Jo discovers how to control rebellion within herself. Albert Sandwich, her stepfather, involves her in his mission of intrigue. He also helps her come to terms with her father's death as well as her mother's marriage, and to find her place in her unusual family. In the sun and sea drenched town she meets dark-haired, lonely Alexis, the son of an exiled member of the opposition government, who shows her the secret of the Citadel. Gradually, she becomes aware of the duplicity and disquietness among the proud people of this country and begins to understand that people are not what they tell you they are. Bawden's keen and sympathetic sense of family abrasions and pre-adolescent anxieties brings Jo and her problems close to home. The story is recounted from Jo's point of view in a straight forward, rather simple style that contains a perfect blend of humor and suspense young readers will enjoy. It also teaches valuable lessons about trust and how some people are misled by appearances because they do not really see.

Reviewed by Ann Keating, Bristol Central High School, Bristol, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Wonder Wheels by Lee Bennett Hopkins.
Dell, 1980. 138 pp. $1.50.

Undoubtedly intended to capitalize on the new popularity of rollerskating, the book is a disgrace to a fine publishing house. It begins implausibly with a polysyllabic, early morning conversation between Mick Thompson and his mother who speak in complete sentences even though they are, respectively, still half asleep and running a vacuum cleaner. Ensuing chapters take Mick to the supermarket where he bags groceries and cerebrates character sketches of customers; to the roller rink where he rehearses for a championship exhibition and meets a girl named Kitty; and to his home where he enjoys a compatible relationship with his parents who invite Kitty to supper. Eluding her domineering mother, Kitty takes long bus rides so she can see Mick and skate with him. At the end of one of these rides, she is met by the man her mother has designated as Kitty's future husband. He murders her. Mick goes to the funeral home to place a yellow rose on her casket and to say, "I love you." The story ends when Mick wins the skating championship and feels sad because Kitty cannot share it with him. Wonder Wheels lacks form, balance, rhythm, and grace. Its only strength is the basic human goodness of its major characters. It is a good example of the kind of book teachers should not recommend to students.

Reviewed by Mary Anne Zak, Suffield High School, Suffield, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Basketball Diaries by Jim Carroll.
Bantam, 1980. 177 pp. $2.50.

You won't find this book on most school library shelves. Nor will many teachers risk ordering it for in-class reading. But Jim Carroll's outrageous story is certain to be a popular underground book among high school students as word of its existence spreads slowly from one fascinated reader to another. Readers will quickly learn that the book is not about basketball--though references to Jim's playing do hold the story (and him) together--but rather about the personal survival of a twelve- to fifteen-year-old white, innercity kid in an unfriendly and unresponsive environment, about school in New York City, about privileged parents, drugs, crime, and sex (both hetero- and homo-sexual)--much of it sordid and depressing. Beneath it all throbs Carroll's desire to find himself, to be somebody, to care and be cared about, and to be listened to. This is not a novel; this is reality--or at least one bright teenager's incredibly well-written view of it--with a bit of adolescent fantasy mixed in. We are privy to his insightful, absurd, angry, funny, beautiful, dirty, moral, immoral, thought-provoking experiences and reflections. And although readers, both adolescent and adult, will probably not be uplifted from slogging through the morass of Jim's young life, they will be wiser for having done so.

Reviewed by Don Gallo.

Where's My Dad? Portraits of Father/Son Relationships in Contemporary Adolescent Literature

Charles R. Duke

The present concern with the destruction of the nuclear family and the increasing absence of close relationships between parents and children noted by sociologists are being reflected in much of the literature for adolescents. Herbert Hendin in an article entitled "The Ties Don't Bind" suggests the following picture of the American family:

> The American family is being undermined by the divisive forces at work in society...forces that are as much phychosocial as they are economic. The family reflects the...trend toward replacing commitment, involvement, and tenderness with self-aggrandizement, exploitiveness, and titillation...Young children are often seen as a pleasureless burden. Older children become extensions of the need to validate one's life.[1]

Writers of adolescent novels have paid some attention to these problems but with emphasis most often being placed on the relationship between mother and daughter or even mother and son. But a search through contemporary adolescent literature will reveal some novels dealing with father/son relationships; these are of two types: those which use the absence of the father, either through death or some other cause, as a basis for the adolescent protagonist to explore his feelings about himself in relation to the memories of the missing parent; or those which provide a picture of direct relationships between father and son, some of which may be positive, some of which may be negative.

In Families, an anecdotal account of the modern family unit in America, author Jane Howard points out that nine out of ten children in American slums are legally fatherless, sometimes simply because their fathers are required to abandon them if the family unit is to qualify for public relief. Yet Howard also indicates that nine hundred thousand American children under the age of eighteen, of whom 50,000 are not yet in school, now live with their male parents. So father may or may not be present during the crucial adolescent years when a boy is growing up.[2]

The effect of the absent father is shown in Alice Bach's A Father Every Few Years where Tim, the main character, has to come to some kind of understanding about his feelings toward Max, his stepfather, who has walked away from Tim and his mother Margot. Tim's struggle with his feelings about being abandoned manifest themselves in his constant worry about money and Margot's spending habits.

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Because Tim has never known his real father Ben, he has only the experience with Max as a possible glimpse of what father and son relations might be. Although Max had his flaws, Tim concludes, after surveying the fathers of his neighborhood friends, that Max was all right and that some fathers, like the father of his pal Joey, who cheated at tennis and monopoly even when playing his son, were worse than no father.

Convinced that he has to get Max back to create a "family," Tim concocts an elaborate scheme to locate him by calling every area code in the country; he enlists the help of his friends in this campaign but before he can put it into operation, Margot decides to go to California for a vacation trip--and, Tim thinks, to locate Max. When Margot sends word she is returning, Tim believes she is bringing Max with her. At his insistence, the neighborhood prepares a welcome home celebration for Margot and Max. But Margot returns alone. Mortified because he was wrong, Tim hides from everyone. Eventually, though, he and Margot are able to talk about Max and the idea of family:

> Margot, it's not Max. We need a father for me and a husband for you.
>
> Who says there have to be a father plus mother plus three children to equal family?...You crave a family television-style--two perfect parents solving the problems of their perfect children in one half hour with two commercials. (p.127)

With both Margot and Tim convinced that they have seen the last of Max, they turn to working out a new relationship and life, realizing that "untying yourself from someone you love takes a very long time."

This untying, however, is not always a simple process. In Barbara Wersba's Run Softly, Go Fast, David Marks, age 19, self-proclaimed hippy, has spent so much of his young life hating his father and much of what he stood for that, when the man dies, David finds himself thrust into a whirlpool of conflicting emotions and memories. Sitting in his New York loft apartment, David tries to sort out his feelings about his father. Thinking that by writing down his thoughts he may be able to find the truth, David takes the reader through the events which eventually led to the estrangement with his father.

Much of David's thinking centers on the kind of man his father Leo appeared to be, a merchant who was never quite content with what he had; to Leo, life was "something to be managed, a big universal shop where you were the boss." Because of this David's interest in the less commercial aspects of life left his father cold. There were moments, though, in the early years, when a relationship between father and son might have been built. One such occasion came when Leo took David, his mother, and Uncle Ben to lunch to announce that he had just gone into a lucrative business partnership. The family greets the announcement with coolness, and David for a fleeting moment recognizes what his father really needs:

> He had made a big announcement at lunch and no one had reacted. He had done something important in the world and nobody cared. Suddenly I could have wept for him, this man who wanted approval so much, who always sweated when he talked and mopped his face with his handkerchief....And I knew that this was my chance to make everything all right. He was my father and I loved him and I had the power to heal his wounds. Had always had that power. (p.27)

But David hesitates, turns away, and the opportunity to make direct contact with his father is lost; as a result, "an invisible wall dropped between them." The wall becomes taller as David learns more about his father; when David discovers that his father has a mistress, the world becomes a dirty place, sullied because no one, not even his father, seems immune to its vices.

David and his father continually miss opportunities for understanding each other. His father reads the diary which David has kept in his room. Rather than supplying some of the answers for which his son is searching, the father is enraged that any son of his could entertain thoughts like those expressed in the diary:

> I wouldn't have believed it, the filth that's written here. What's the matter with you? Have you become a degenerate or something? Words I wouldn't use in a men's locker room. Descriptions of things.... You need a psychiatrist, buddy, because what I've read here is sickening. You think I've been tough on you in the past? Well, the program's just starting. (p.52)

David's father seems to have all the answers. He arranges David's schooling, chooses his clothes, even gets David's friends to find him dates. The rebellion of son against father is inevitable. As David works through all this after his father's death, he begins to understand the source of their conflict:

> We threatened each other. Like two animals sniffing around each other's territory, braced for a snarling snuffling battle. His world of money and objects and conservatism was a cannon being unloaded against me, while my world made him feel...I don't know. A million kids in America defying their parents and running away from home, freaking out on sex and blowing their minds on dope--while all I did was sit in my room. Because--and this is the part that hurts--I was a very good boy. (p.53)

But David did not remain a "very good boy" for long. Having nothing to rebel against except his father and the lifestyle he provided, David chooses to leave home and move to Greenwich Village where he experiments with sex, drugs, and a completely different lifestyle. Before he leaves home, though, he makes one last attempt to reach his father; unable to talk to him directly, David writes a letter trying to explain that he cannot be everything his father wants but asking for his father's understanding and help.

David's father never acknowledges the letter, and father and son cannot bridge the gulf that widens between them. When his father lies dying of cancer, David still cannot put aside the animosity and betrayal he feels. Although he finally goes to visit his father in the hospital, his father no longer recognizes him. His father's death, the funeral, and all the writing down of memories do not relieve David of the greatest mystery--who was his father and why did he do the things he did. But David does arrive at one point of understanding and forgiveness:

> The only important thing is that you lived on this earth for a while and were my father, and that I came from you and that my children will come from me.... And if it's true--that living is the thing, no matter how painful--then I can thank you for my life, the gift of it.... I don't hate you any more, Leo.... My father, sleep. (pp. 168-169)

Not all fathers, of course, are absent from the home. In the second type of novel dealing with fathers and sons, relationships are worked out on a day to day basis. Much is usually made in these novels of the image of manhood which the father tries to convey to his son. In Virginia Hamilton's M. C. Higgins, The Great, for example, the macho image of the male is very strong. Jones Higgins, M. C.'s father, delights in testing his son's strength, but when the father loses to the son in such tests, the sudden awareness of age and declining prowess hurt and the father strikes back. "Pain took M. C.'s breath away. Jones squeezed twice, and each time M. C.'s waist and shoulders jerked off the ground. Finally M. C. managed to scream." Although M.C. might not be the equal of his father in sheer physical strength, he does surpass him in other ways. M.C. swims far better, can climb a slippery steel pole, and is able to overcome his fear of the Killburns whose physical appearance and life style frighten M.C.'s father to the point where he runs inside the house when they appear in his dooryard.

The contest for physical strength and the image of manhood tend to discourage moments of direct communication between father and son. "Just have him listen to me, M.C. thought, have him hear. Maybe now he and Jones were sitting without a war between them. Maybe he could speak about what was on his mind." But such fleeting moments are cut short by Jones telling the boy to leave him alone. So it is M.C., finally, who has to solve the puzzle of what to do with the "enormous boil of uprooted trees and earth plastered together by rain" that hangs in precarious balance above his home, threatening to wipe him and his family off the mountainside during the next hard rain. When it comes time for action to protect the family, the boy assumes the responsibility and moves a bit closer to adulthood, supplanting a father who cannot change, who has ceased to make a real effort to adapt to changing circumstances.

Not all these stories end with the boy moving beyond the father. In The Grizzly by Annabel and Edgar Johnson, we find a good example of the father trying to re-establish a relationship with his son after a prolonged absence; but the father is unaware of how traumatic the earlier relationship had been for his son.

> The word seemed strange when David spoke it silently to himself: Father. Other people had dads, nice men who took them places on Sundays, to a ball game or a movie... Whenever he thought about his own father, the dark image rose in his mind, making him shiver, even in broad daylight. He wasn't sure why--he couldn't remember too clearly all the bad things that had happened in those early days before his father went away. He only knew he dreaded the time when the nightmare man would come back and he would have to meet him face to face. (p. 34)

It is the macho image, again, which seems to create the difficulty between son and father:

> From years ago a terrible sentence came to hang in the air--the last thing his father said before he went away for good! "I warn you, Jeanne, you'll turn this boy into a sissy!" Worse than some sort of threat, it was like an awful prediction. And David knew--as he stared out at the wild country, he knew--that his father hadn't forgotten that. (p. 10)

Son and newly returned father take a weekend camping trip into the wilds, and the trip turns into a nightmare for David at first; unable to fish, unable to do any of the woodsman things his father expects of him the boy despairs of ever finding a way to please his father. David's father Mark tries to communicate his love for the outdoors to David, the freshness of the air, the thrilling sound of the slap of a beaver's tail against water, but David is so frozen with fear over what his father might do to him--"the man loomed over him, fixing him with those fire-blue eyes"--that he runs off by himself every chance he has.

Only when a grizzly bear, protecting its cubs, attacks Mark and badly mauls him is David able to begin to work out his problem of how to relate to his father. Without realizing it, the boy begins to draw on the knowledge which his father has imparted to him just in the short time they have been together. David conquers his fear of the water and begins to find other ways of building his confidence. All this is done while Mark lies wounded from the grizzly attack. Suddenly brought up short by his own weakness from the grizzly's attack and his own shame at not having read the signs of the grizzly's appearance more carefully, Mark begins to share with David perceptions about fatherhood:

> I've sometimes been looked upon as a screwball, for wanting to get off by myself. Never cared much what other people thought. Now I wonder....Any other father is glad enough to sit around the house, read the sports pages on a Sunday. Take a nap. Go for a picnic in the park....And afterward, they play badminton. Don't they? Isn't that what a kid pictures for a father--

> some guy who'll wash the car in the summer and shovel sidewalks in the winter? And never get you into tight corners? (p.106)

And there is the proverbial like father - like son story to partially explain Mark's behavior toward his son. Mark recalls how hard his own father was on him, whipping him when he failed to do something correctly, and how his father had bullied his mother. Mark recalls, "I left him...never went back. It wasn't the kind of childhood you think about with pleasure. But I did think it was a lesson, of sorts. I swore no kid of mine would ever be afraid of me. How wrong could I get?" (p.108) With that confession the tension begins to ease; David gets his first taste of real fishing, Mark begins to express pleasure and surprise at the things David can do, and the two of them begin their trip back to civilization where--the reader is led to believe--a lasting relationship can begin.

But not always do the father and son rejoin forces so easily nor does it work out so smoothly in the end. In Walter Dean Myers' It Ain't All for Nothin', twelve-year-old Tippy moves in with his father after Tippy's grandmother has to go into a hospital and can no longer care for him, his mother having died several years earlier. Tippy does not have the advantage of an uncluttered and isolated environment in which to renew his relationship with his father Lonnie.

> It wasn't a nice place. Once when he took me to his place there was a guy who had been cut sitting on the floor in the hallway...and it always smelled like somebody had peed in the hallway, and you had to hold your breath when you went upstairs. (p. 20)

Tippy discovers that he must adapt to Lonnie's way of living. What little money Lonnie has he gets from burglaries. People, particularly women, come and go from the apartment; food is a sometime thing, with Tippy expected to forage for his own, at least until Lonnie uses Tippy to get on the welfare rolls. The trip to the welfare office makes Tippy sharply aware of how much he misses a "real" father. During the interview in the welfare office, Lonnie tells Tippy to call him Daddy. Tippy explains:

> I had always wanted to call him Daddy. I used to hear my friend Earl call his father Daddy, and I used to think about calling Lonnie that. But when he came over once and I called him Daddy he got real mad and said his name was Lonnie, it wasn't no damn Daddy. He made me feel ashamed to call him Daddy, and I still felt funny about it. (p. 30)

But once the welfare supervisor is satisfied with Lonnie's claim, Lonnie forbids Tippy to call him Daddy any more.

In spite of himself, Lonnie does take some interest in Tippy's development, advising him on the best way to become a man. Although couched in street language, the advice echoes that offered to M.C. by his father and to David by his father:

> You got to start thinking about being a man. And being a man is all about not letting nobody take your manhood from you, then you ain't no man. You a punk. I know all about that and I don't let nobody take by manhood. (p. 43)

But Lonnie has a fulltime job hanging onto his own manhood without spending a good deal of time worrying about Tippy's. As a result, when Tippy turns to drinking, Lonnie ignores it, but when Lonnie needs Tippy to help in some robberies, he forces Tippy to accompany him.

Lonnie confesses to Tippy that when he was young, he and his father never got along. "My daddy never played with me. He used to be too busy. I used to have to go out by myself and maybe play with some of the other kids' fathers or by myself." (p. 32) Lonnie's solution to that problem with Tippy is to buy him a basketball with money taken in a robbery and then go out to play with him on a neighborhood court. But Lonnie drinks so much while playing ball that the other players simply laugh, letting him make a fool of himself in front of his son. Desperately clinging to what little self-respect he can muster, Lonnie explains why he keeps Tippy around:

> A lot of cats can't make no children of their own so they try to get next to another guy's kids and then chump him off by being nice. I dug that action before. People look at you and start asking why you ain't got no kids, but if they see you with a kid all the time, especially a boy kid, then they think you're a man. (p. 88)

Tippy, however, sees little value in Lonnie's philosophy, perhaps from having been exposed to the philosophy of his grandmother, who, though poor, always maintained a strict honesty in her dealings with people, including Tippy. Disgusted, hurt, and desperate to escape, he turns his father into the police. Prior to Lonnie's conviction, however, Tippy has discovered a surrogate father, a bus driver named Ronald who, with his wife, takes care of Tippy when he passes out one day on the street after too much drinking. When Lonnie goes to prison, Tippy is remanded to the custody of the bus driver and his wife; but even with some sense of stability now in his life, Tippy still clings to a hope that he and Lonnie can work something out.

> I write to Lonnie and he writes back to me. Sometimes I really look forward to getting his letters and I wonder why, because he hurt me more than anybody I know. I guess it's because he is my father and I want him and me to be okay...And even if I feel, deep inside, that it really ain't going to be that way, I'm still hoping. (p. 159)

Among the books which deal with direct father and son relationships, perhaps the most powerful is Robert Newton Peck's _A Day No Pigs Would Die_. A simple but moving story of a Shaker family in Vermont, the novel offers one of the more positive pictures of a father caring about how his son views the land and the way he lives. Haven Peck is a simple man, a believer in hard labor. His work as a hog killer for the area is widely respected; he pays his debts, and he helps his neighbors. He tries to pass these qualities on to his son Robert. Whether it is Robert getting a piglet from a neighbor in return for saving the neighbor's cow, or following the proper procedure for smoking the apple trees to drive the worms away, Haven always tries to provide his son with an explanation of why things have to be done certain ways.

Haven tolerates the presence of Pinky, the piglet given to Robert by Ben Tanner, but only because the sow may be useful in providing a litter which can be sold. It is the pig which brings father and son as close as they will ever be. Pinky proves to be barren and the Pecks cannot afford to continue feeding her. Robert understands that his father and he will have to kill the pig. In what is one of the most powerful scenes in the book, we see father and son facing the pig-killing together. Although he knows that the pig must die, that makes it no easier for Robert and he finally breaks down and cries as the pig lies dead on the ground between him and his father.

> "Oh, Papa. My heart's broke."
> "So is mine," said Papa. "But I'm thankful you're a man."
>
> ...
>
> "That's what being a man is all about boy. It's just doing what's got to be done."
>
> I felt his big hand touch my face, and it wasn't the hand that killed hogs. It was almost as sweet as Mama's....It was the hand that just butchered Pinky. He did it. Because he had to. Hated to and had to. And he knew that he'd never have nerve to say to me that he was sorry....I couldn't help it. I took his hand to my mouth and held it against my lips and kissed it....So he'd understand that I'd forgive him even if he killed me....He looked down at me and then he looked away. With his free arm he raked the sleeve of his work shirt across his eyes. It was the first time I ever seen him do it. The only time. (pp. 129-130)

Haven Peck is a proud man; although he cannot read or write, he knows what makes his life good. But he is a man unable to express any great feeling to his son. Even when Haven has to prepare his son to take over the tasks of the home place, because Haven knows he will not last the winter, there is no sentimentality, no reaching out for sympathy, although his son years to let his father know his feelings.

> I got up from the chair I was in so as I could be near him. I touched the sleeve of his shirt and felt his whole body stiffen. He looked away as he spoke. "It's got to be you, Rob.... Come spring, you aren't the boy of the place. You're the man. A man of thirteen. But no less a man. And whatever has to be done on this land, it's got to be did by you, Rob.

> . . .
>
> I didn't believe it, and I couldn't say anything. I just hoped he'd reach out and touch me or kiss me or something. But he just got up from his chair, wrapped a hot rock from the fireplace in a sack for his bed, and went upstairs. (p.115)

Haven Peck dies in his own barn, in his sleep, among the animals and implements which were his life. The reader never questions the believability of thirteen-year-old Robert assuming his role as man of the place, making the necessary funeral arrangements, giving the proper funeral comments about his father, and watching him buried. The routine of life at the Peck farm goes on, scarcely interrupted by the passage of the father. But at the end of the funeral day, Rob goes out to his father's unmarked grave on the hillside behind the house.

> Somewhere down under all that Vermont Clay was my father, Haven Peck. Buried deep in the land he sweated so hard on and longed to own so much. And now it owned him. "Good night, Papa," I said. We had thirteen good years." (p. 139)

Because these novels do not offer the most flattering portrayal of American fathers, adolescent boys may not always like what they find in these stories. But adolescent readers may be reassured by the idea, inherent in all of these books, that sons can cope with the absence of their fathers or can work out some kind of relationship which allows both father and son to come to a better understanding of each other. That such relationships are not achieved without a good deal of pain and misunderstanding is obvious.

Teaching novels about the family, particularly about child and parent relationships, can be difficult in the classroom. However, each of the books discussed here offers a number of important considerations which adolescents need to face. There is the question of divorce and the single parent, the dilemma of dealing with death of a parent, the force of economic survival of the family unit, and the need for understanding on both sides when a father returns to establish a relationship with his son. Writing or discussion about such books should focus on the books themselves, leaving the adolescent reader to make up his or her mind as to whether personal examples and problems will be brought up. The wise teacher of adolescent literature in such situations always listens, and responds to the expressed and inferred needs of students, but does not push to invade what little privacy and control of the world the adolescent may want to retain.

OTHER BOOKS DEALING WITH FATHER/SON RELATIONSHIPS

Cleaver, Vera and Bill. *Grover.*
Gaines, Ernest J. *In My Father's House.*
Kerr, M. E. *The Son of Someone Famous.*
McCall, Dan. *Jack the Bear.*

Peck, Richard. *Father Figure*.
Peck, Robert Newton. *Millie's Boy*.
Zindel, Paul. *Confessions of a Teenage Baboon*.

FOOTNOTES

1. Herbert Hendin, "The Ties Don't Bind," *The New York Times*, August 26, 1976.
2. Jane Howard, *Familes*, New York: Berkley Books, 1978.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Ask for Love and They Give You Rice Pudding by Bradford Angier & Barbara Corcoran. Bantam, 1979. 119 pp. $1.75.

Despite the fact that at eighteen he has lots of money, his own car, and his own sailboat, Robbie Benson is not happy. Both he and his absentee alcoholic mother were abandoned by his father when he was five; his best friend is dying; he's a failure with girls; he has few friends since, he feels, his money alienates him. He does have problems, especially since he has no idea who he is or what to do with his life. Basically, Robbie suffers from the same ills that trouble many other adolescents who wander through novels searching for their identities. And although the format of *Ask for Love*... is reminiscent of other novels with the same theme, it lacks the quality of some of those. The authors have created a bright, interesting guy, though perhaps a bit too "slick" and sophisticated for the average teenager to identify with. Also, Robbie fits too easily into the "poor little rich kid" syndrome and is more stereotypical than real. So money doesn't bring happiness, but even that point is negated when the reader finds that Robbie's trip to Europe will be financed by inherited money. *Ask for Love and They Give You Rice Pudding* is not a bad book; there are just others that say what it says and do what it does better.

Reviewed by Ann Norton, Bristol Central High School, Bristol, CT.

Fictional Models for Female Readers

Gwen H. Brooks

"When I was a teenager, I didn't know who I was, or what I was going to be, or whether I was going to make it at all." This reflection on her adolescence by a woman in her late thirties echoes the major concerns of the adolescent female: Who am I? What will I be? Will I survive?

The instability, the emotional turbulence, the intense highs and equally intense lows of the adolescent female are expectable life events with which most of the adults who interact with them expect to cope--cope, not cure. The adolescent malady is certainly not new. The evidence of its existence has been with us since the beginning of recorded time, and there is no evidence that we will wake up in the morning and it will be cured.

The last half-century has taught us much about the dynamic process of human development in the pre-adult years. We are only now beginning to understand the process of adult development and all of the implications the developmental tasks of childhood and adolescence have for the developmental process of adulthood.

A central developmental task of adolescence and early adulthood is the achievement of ego identity. The young person must establish a sense of identity separate from her or his parents and significant others. Clarification of personal values and goals paves the way for a teenager's emergence into adulthood reasonably prepared to assume the tasks of the maturing adult.

Sexual sterotypes play a key role in the identity process, especially for females. Sexual sterotyping is, and is likely to remain for some time, pervasive throughout our society. Adolescent females buffeted by the winds of change are victims of sexual sterotyping. They are caught in the conflict of the "shoulds and oughts." On the one hand they are taught (or subliminally persuaded) what nice girls/ladies/women "should be." On the other hand, they are urged to assert themselves to have what "ought to be." The conflict between the shoulds and the oughts may be carried on within the family, within the agencies with whom the young female interacts, or between or among any of the groups around whom her life revolves. The tenuous hold she has on self-identity may be further exacerbated by the pressure to accept the conflicting values of the people who are responsible for helping her to define her role and shape her identity. What she will become may easily be determined by those persons who are most forceful in pursuing and teaching their own values.

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ROLE MODELS IN REAL LIFE

According to a study reported in the September 24, 1980 issue of The Hartford Courant, mothers, fathers and teachers topped the hierarchy of influences in teen values and behaviors in 1960. In 1980, friends and peers, who had ranked third in 1960, now top the list and mother and father rank second. Television, radio, and records jumped from number 8 to number 3, while teachers dropped to fourth place. In each of the lists, magazines, newspapers, and advertising were listed as being among the ten most important influences.

Developing young people need role models to emulate. Boys and young men need not look far to find models who are fulfilling "the dream," and with whom they can vicariously identify. If they express a desire to play pro ball, become president of an industrial conglomerate, or fly to the moon, they are encouraged and supported by the models who are readily available to feed their imaginations. Girls and young women are now being told that they too can attain "the dream." But where are the models that show them the dream is attainable? Struggling with the complex social, biological, and psychological forces involved in growing to adulthood, girls and young women are exposed to few models who depict the fulfillment of "the dream." The feminine images to which they are exposed through the media let the young female know that the world is her oyster--if...she is beautiful, sexy, able to expertly juggle the roles of lover/homemaker/parent/businesswomen, while her hair holds up, her breath smells sweet, and she absolutely never perspires! The pretty, plastic-perfect faces and bodies of the Margaux Hemingways or the Charlie's Angels provide unreal models for girls who are daily faced with the lumps and bumps of adolescent femininity. Womanhood is a "great pair of legs," and "wet-look lips." Liberated is being told it's okay to pick up the phone and invite Harvey over for a little creme sherry. Fortunes are made on female vulnerability--the vulnerability to finding herself through others.

Unfortunately, there are few "live" prominent American women to serve as positive role models for girls and young women. Opportunities are limited or non-existent for young females to identify with women in sex-atypical roles, particularly women at the top levels of the sciences, business, and government. A young woman who wants to dwell in the White House has only "the president's lady" with whom to identify. The one woman presently serving in the Senate seems an unlikely candidate for the presidency, and no female candidate seems "viable" for election in this generation. A modern woman may live to see one of her sex become a traveler in space, but it will be a journey already pioneered by men. In short, girls and young women maturing in the 80s have few models to define the new roles of women for them.

Studies of adolescent and adult females indicate that mothers and teachers have been the most important role models for women. The research literature also indicates that developing females need positive male figures to whom to look for approval and support. The type and degree of support and approval received affects the degree of independence a woman achieves and the age at which she achieves it. Most of the male figures in the life of a matur-

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ing female are strongly dominant figures. She is likely to start and end life having her health cared for by male physicians, and her spiritual health ministered to by male clergy. In the political arena she votes for male-dominated governing bodies, and her fate in the legal arena is probably decided by male lawyers and judges. She witnesses sports vicariously as the ecstacy of victory and the agony of defeat are played out in the athletic arena every Monday night--and Saturday afternoon, and Sunday night, and.... These exploits are reported in minute detail by male athletic supporters (also known as sportscasters), but the cheers are exuberantly led by female "sexy-typical" cheerleaders.

A majority of women report their fathers and male teachers as the most supportive male figures in their developing years. If they marry, their husbands most often take over this role. They are, whether or not supplied with love and support, surrounded by male figures who supply the images of what male "should be."

ROLE MODELS IN FICTION

Young people, particularly girls, are likely to turn to books as sources through which to identify. Books provide a means of escape, as well as entertainment. Identity figures are readily available and escape is possible into a world that makes no demands on shaky self-confidence and low self-esteem. Role models are provided temporarily for a young person who is without strong role figures to whom she can turn, or peer models for a lonely teenager who is feeling isolated from the mainstream. Identity with a character or characters much like herself can assure her that she is not alone in the struggle she faces growing up in a society changing all around her, making demands that she is not sure she can fulfill.

Who are the role models provided to these young readers? The mature adults who are the writers, recommenders, and providers of young adult literature should be cognizant of the fictionalized role models provided in the books young women are reading. A few characters in several popular novels can provide some clues. Judy Blume's writings are known to most young girls. It's Not The End of the World is directed toward the pubescent girl. The heroine, sixth grade Karen, is adjusting to the upheaval of her parent's impending divorce. She is, according to her fifth grade teacher, mature, well-adjusted, and eager to learn. Karen feels her teacher must have mixed her up with someone else. Her teacher was a "nice person" before she got married, but marrying turned her into a "witch." Karen's teachers are female, her principal is male. The time Karen spends at Girl Scouts is the most time she gets to spend with her best friend because Debbie's mother forces her into every conceivable lesson known to womankind. Her newest frient, Val, is frequently left alone by her divorced mother who is dating her current boyfriend. Karen's father is affectionate and caring of his children but has worked long hours to provide nice things for his family. This leads to the quarrels that bring about the impending divorce. Karen's mother collects and refinishes antiques, has a bitchy disposition, wants more attention from her husband than she is getting, and wants to be looked at by him as a person who has "feelings" and "ideas." She is going to work as a receptionist for the first time since her marriage and plans to go back to school to take English literature she missed out on when she got married at age twenty. Karen's aunt and uncle disapprove of her mother's plans, feeling she will neglect her family and be unable to manage her house and children.

Sandra Scoppetone writes about teen-age lesbianism in *Happy Endings Are All Alike*. The book, directed toward older teen girls, concerns two beautiful teenage girls, Jaret and Peggy. Family and friends are unable to understand how two beautiful girls could be more attracted to each other than to boys. Peggy has a sister who "was quite homely" and was sure no man would ever want her. She is disgusted by the relationship of the two girls. Jaret's mother, Kay, is an "unusual woman" who pretended to Jaret that the relationship was "all fine with her," but "no matter how liberated she might be," it was not something she could fully accept. Kay is afraid to share the fact of Jaret's lesbianism with her husband, Bert. Kay had married Bert when she was twenty and "hadn't known any better, hadn't seen beyond his looks," and often curses herself for being so "shallow." He is still madly in love with her, but "often accused her of regarding him as a sex object and she had a hard time denying it." When Jaret is brutally raped, Bert is loving and supportive as is Jaret's younger brother. When the relationship of the two girls is exposed, Peggy's father is forced to face what he would not admit to himself. While he voices his support of them, he decides to give up his medical practice and move to another town.

The mother in Norma Klein's *It's Okay If You Don't Love Me* is twice divorced and presently living with Elliot, a psychology professor. Married at 24, Mother had "split to California," but came back to live in New York where "everyone's parents are divorced." Mother and her best friend, Rifka, discuss their children's sex lives much as they would their childhood diseases. "These kids," says Rifka, "they want orgasms on a silver platter."

Jody, the main character, is on the pill but "hates to tell people, even other girls...it's hard to admit that sex is something you want to do." By her own definition, Jody is not "a dog or a loser," and, though no Miss America, she gets her share of "comments from construction workers." In New York, she says, "girls like me are a dime a dozen...sort of aggressive and insecure. We'll all end up being doctors and lawyers and being analyzed for nine million years." It took Jody "five long months" to seduce her boyfrient, Lyle. "It was a long hard struggle," she tells her former stepfather. About her natural father, she says that her mother, "even though she was once married to Daddy, is much more detached about him than I am." Jody and Eric see their father only once a year on their birthdays. He is a rich dentist, remarried and raising a second family. On Eric's sixteenth birthday he wants to send his son to "a really good call girl."

IMPLICATIONS

Who are the fictional female models? Who are the adult models in teen fiction? Do we suggest by implication that only beautiful girls marry? That marrying young gives license for discontent--

that there is no room for growth in a young marriage? When we present mother figures who are as unsure of themselves as their teenage daughters, are we adding to the insecurity a young woman is trying to overcome? Are fathers still breaking their sons in with "good" call girls?

These questions are not raised to censure or approve of the novels, their authors, or the characters. The authors are all popular writers who are certainly meeting needs for many young readers. It is time, however, to examine some of the stereotypes we strengthen by inference. Are we exploiting the population we should be guiding, or are we assuming a level of development which the reader has not yet reached and who cannot, therefore, understand a situation such as a mother who is still wrestling with questions which she had not yet resolved from her own adolescence?

In many instances, the words say one thing, but the models suggest another. Is young adult literature telling it like it *is*, like it *should* be, or like it *ought* to be? Perhaps the adolescent reader is being presented too often with an interpretation of the teen world which has been sifted through the reflections and perceptions of the adult writer. We should, at the very least, examine the cast of characters to determine whether the old stereotypes are wrapped up in a new set of euphemisms for an old set of values.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

P.S. Write Soon by Colby Rodowsky.
Dell, 1980. 156 pp. $1.50.

This Laurel-Leaf paperback joins the growing list of books that deal with adolescents confronted with a handicap. Here Tanner McClean, who must wear a heavy metal leg brace because her leg has been paralyzed in a car accident, simply creates a fantasy world for herself via her pen-pal letters which vividly describe fictitious athetic triumphs and fake but fabulous family functions. Only the pen-pal's announcement of a coming visit to meet her jolts her back to reality. The author's clever format juxtaposes Tanner's spurious letters with chapters telling it "like it is," thus making her wish-fulfillment correspondence even more pathetic. Although I was moved by the slumber party episode where Tanner sleeps with her brace rather than risk removing it in front of her friends, my sympathy for her was all but squelched by the author's "overkill" in depicting her nastiness. This kid has the worst case of the "uglies" since the Wicked Witch of the West went after Dorothy and Toto. The very nastiness which turned me off, however, combined with the easy reading, might be very appealing to fifth graders and middle schoolers.

Reviewed by Barbara Guerra, Newington High School, Newington, CT.

The Catcher

Carol Carpenter

Hunched over,
his texts craddled to his chest,
the student scuttles sideways into the room,
a ghost crab.

I sit on the desk,
dangling my feet in
seas of books I read
as a teen, a fish hooked
on Holden Caulfield.
I, too, waited
for the worm to wiggle,
spotted plastic flies,
called them phony.

"Did you," the ghost crab asks,
"run away?"

"In my head," I answer.

He buries his eyes
in pages.
Words, at high tide,
wash his cheeks.
He catches
specks of sand.

Carol Carpenter teaches writing at the Detroit Institute of Technology. Her poems and short stories have appeared in such publications as Poem, Magazine, and Colorado Woman.

Child Abuse in Young Adult Literature

Nancy Wessels Robinson

Until very recently so little attention was paid to the subject of child abuse that the statistics available are far from reliable. One widely accepted estimate of child abuse in the United States is that there are about 1,000,000 cases per year. Of these, about 2,000 children die. And, for every case reported four go unreported.[1]

It is known that child abuse and neglect occur in all segments of society--encompassing all classes, races, locales, and intellectual levels. Studies have also shown that people who mistreat their children were often themselves abused or neglected in childhood.

The fact that this aspect of life is very much a part of our society is reflected in the increase in adolescent literature dealing with this subject. Few of the books I have reviewed were published prior to 1970. They do, indeed, encompass every segment of society. The one thread running through each novel, however, is hope. In each case there is a person who cares--who is willing to get involved.

In every book I read the family unit had deteriorated and one parent was left to raise the child (children), often on meager funds and with almost no hope of a better life in the future. Usually in adolescent literature the mother becomes the abuser. In fact, most studies have shown that one parent is usually the abuser (the father 50% of the time) with the other parent as passive observer.[2]

On the surface it seems to be true that child abuse is more likely to occur among low income groups. This can be explained by the fact that the poor live under conditions of much greater strain and frustration in their daily lives. Conditions of poverty tend to exacerbate the problem. But these families are also highly visible because of welfare services. Child abuse in more affluent families can be kept undercover because they are not exposed to public regulatory agencies. This is reflected in the literature. In adolescent novels maltreatment occurs on all socioeconomic levels.

There are basically four types of child abuse: 1) physical abuse, 2) neglect, 3) emotional abuse (often verbal), and 4) sexual abuse.[3] This, too, is reflected in the literature. The books I reviewed, however, rarely fell into a single category. Thus it is unfair to state that a complex novel such as Hatter Fox, for example,

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is about sexual abuse only. For purposes of this paper, however, I have chosen to group each novel according to the type of abuse most prevalent.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Cages of Glass, Flowers of Time (readability level 7th grade)[4] is a noteworthy first novel by Charlotte Culin. Claire Burden had been raised by her artist father and her wealthy grandmother. When her grandmother dies and her father's drunkenness results in the neighbors turning him in to the authorities for neglect, Claire, age 14, is forced to live with her mother on a tenant farm. Her parents' marriage had been a forced one, she later discovers, and her upper class father had been cold and unloving toward his new wife. Claire's mother herself was the only daughter of an abusive mother who had forced her into the marriage in hope of financial gains. Now Claire must deal with a mother who is drunk most of the time. The endless beers "Mom" consumes to ease the pain of her life also cause her to be unspeakably cruel to Claire. She stubs cigarettes out on Claire's bare arms and threatens to kill her if she ever finds her drawing (a reminder of her artist husband). Claire's grandmother is even worse. Claire hates her mother but she is able to rationalize her behavior because of her drinking. When "Mom" is sober she is a pitifully weak and broken character. The grandmother, on the other hand, is cruel. Her eyes are mean. Claire notes, "Grandmother wasn't drunk. She beat mom like that and she wasn't even drunk." (p.33)

Through the love and compassion of Mr. Beasley, an old black man, and Clyde Bowman, a handsome boy at Claire's new school, Claire is forced to take responsibility for the actions affecting her life. This is a slow process, however, and much of the novel deals with Claire's attempts to come to terms with her own identity.

In the Culin novel, as in much of adolescent literature, the theme of a parent who was abused as a child becoming the abuser is common. But in the novels there is an end--it does not become a self perpetuating cycle--someone intervenes. Unfortunately, this is not necessarily the case in life.

Don't Hurt Laurie (readability level 5th grade) by Willo Davis Roberts is a novel about a middle class white family--mother, daughter, stepfather, and two stepchildren. Laurie, the daughter, looks and acts like her father who had abandoned his family when Laurie was a small child. Laurie's mother, Annabelle, doesn't hurt her stepchildren, but her behavior toward her daughter is brutal. Laurie has been cut with a butcher knife, burned, thrown down a flight of stairs, and struck with a fireplace tool. Whenever the emergency ward at one hospital becomes suspicious, they move to a new neighborhood and a new hospital. Nell, the younger children's grandmother, and Laurie's stepfather both ask questions. They can't believe that any child can be as clumsy as Anabelle claims Laurie is, but they never really suspect the nightmare Laurie must live with. Only Tim, Laurie's stepbrother, knows the truth but both children are afraid to speak.

The fear of speaking to someone about the horrible conditions under which they live is common in child abuse cases. First, the child who is abused believes that it is somehow his or her fault--that his behavior has resulted in the abuse. Next, the child thinks that this must be something that all parents do. And, finally, the child fears that no one would believe him anyway. Laurie finally does tell grandma Nell and her stepfather intervenes.

The book realistically portrays the facts that the research in the area of child abuse has confirmed: the mother was abused as a child; the abused child is consumed by guilt and fear; and the child is taken from one hospital emergency room to another, from one neighborhood to another so that no one has a chance to ask questions. The novel is all the more disturbing because the family really could be anyone's next door neighbor. Yet, the book's outcome is too contrived. One gets the feeling that all will be forgiven and forgotten. The emotional scars which Laurie surely must bear are somehow overlooked. In spite of this, Don't Hurt Laurie is a believable portrayal of child abuse among the middle class. Its low readability level make it an excellent choice for many of the poorer readers in the junior and senior high setting.

In The Girl Who Lived on the Ferris Wheel (readability mixed--ranging from 3.5 to 8) by Louis Moeri, the author states that her hope in writing this story was that children who find themselves in homes where they are abused would see that they are not unique--that they can face reality and survive.

Clotilde (Til) lives in San Francisco with her divorced mother, Gertrude. It is wartime (1943) and her father works six days a week loading supply ships. He can only see Til on Saturdays when he takes her to the amusement park and they ride the ferris wheel. Til hates the ferris wheel which is seen as a microcosm of her whole world. In it she is imprisoned behind the steel bar and "sentenced to spend her whole life going up-and up-and up-and over, sick and dizzy and unable to escape." (p.18) In this same way she is entrapped by her mother. Gertrude is psychotic and in her disturbed state she perceived Til as someone who has set herself above her mother.

In Somewhere a Child is Crying by Vincent J. Fontana, psychotic behavior of abusive parents is described as follows:

> They are incapable of mothering (or parenting) because they were not mothered themselves; their own emotions have been pummeled out of shape, and they cannot share themselves with others. In their frustration over being unable to care or share, they strike out at the nearest vulnerable being; they impute to their children characteristics and motives and attitudes that children simply do not have, qualities that would be malicious or calculating in an adult but are impossible in a child.[5]

This corresponds to the author's description of Gertrude's background. Her parents had never cared for her; she always felt unwanted... unloved.

The novel reaches its climax when Til discovers a long row of butcher knives on the kitchen table and realizes they are intended for her. Several people try to help Til, but in the end, it is Til who must save herself. Her closing remark is, "I guess sometimes you've got to save yourself...by yourself." (p.117) If Moeri's book is able to get this message across to the reader (and I feel it does) the author's purpose for writing will have been realized.

NEGLECT (PHYSICAL-EMOTIONAL)

The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear (readability level 8th grade) by Kin Platt is a disturbing novel about a twelve year old boy who has been so neglected by his parents that he lapses into schizophrenic behavior. His mother is sometimes violent and abuses Roger physically, but primarily she is sadistic in her behavior toward her son. The father is so concerned with advancing his fortune as a Hollywood agent that he is indifferent to Roger's needs.

The characters in this novel differ dramatically from those in the other novels covered. They are affluent, we are told virtually nothing about their pasts, and no reason can be cited for their treatment of Roger. As one of a long string of psychiatrists and speech therapists told Roger's parents, "This boy is suffering from the condition, not too unusual today, of having two highly intelligent, busily preoccupied, unconditionally detached people for parents." (p.172)

Never does Roger's mother show any sign of tenderness for her son. Although she never burns Roger with cigarettes, pushes him down stairs, or attacks him with a knife, her tactics are just as brutal and the end result just as devastating. She appears to be totally oblivious to her son's needs. He spends his first winter in New York without a coat or boots and he is forced to beg her daily for his bus fare to school and the money for lunch. To avoid this daily argument he often leaves without money and doesn't eat all day.

The catalogue of horrors continues until Roger is driven to madness. His mother is ultimately jailed and his father has no time for anything but a check to cover the damages. Again, the book ends on a note of hope. Through the love and care of Roger Tunnell, the fiancé of a beautiful model who lived in Roger's building, and Miss Crim, his speech therapist, Roger starts his fight back to sanity.

In each of these novels the evil characters, the abusers, have been contrasted with those who love and care and sacrifice in order to repair the damages done to these children. This is not true of the next book and is, in part, one of the reasons why I would not use it at any level.

I Hate to Talk About Your Mother (readability level 7th grade) by Hettie Jones is the story of thirteen year old Alicia Prince. Alicia is not physically abused by her mother, she is neglected.

Her mother, Fay, is a blond, Polish-American, ex-hippie who had a "love" child in the '60s with a black man from the Dominican Republic. Alicia has had to live with Fay's drunkness and open sexuality.

The book recounts a weekend at the New Jersey shore. Fay leaves Alicia to fend for herself while she drinks and picks up a variety of men. Here Alicia is definitely out of her element. In New York City her dark skin and coarse black hair had not even been noticed, but in this sleepy resort town her darkness contrasts with her mother's fair skin and blond hair, giving the locals something to talk and wonder about.

The book is poorly written, full of grammatical errors, and contains a profusion of four letter words, put in presumably with the idea that this would appeal to the teenage market. Never does the reader get a clear picture of the setting--nothing seems to fit together. So disjointed is the book's plot that the reader is left with the impression that the author's purpose is to show that corn-rowing her hair provides Alicia with the greatest opportunity to express her own identity. This novel represents everything that can be bad in adolescent literature. In no way does it affirm the best in human beings. There is no character in the novel to balance the unconcerned and uncaring people we see.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds by Paul Zindel is a drama about a woman who turns into an abuser because she herself was abused--only this time the abuse has been by society. The mother in Zindel's play had been constantly ridiculed by her peers when she was a child. She was an outsider as a child and this has not changed with adulthood. Beatrice, is a bitter, wrecked, failure of a woman. She can't understand what went wrong with her life and she resents the fact that so much of her has been wasted.

Now she spends her days caring for senile boarders for $50.00 a week. She can't stand the old people who are sent to her because their relatives have no time for them, but she resents even more the fact that these relatives live busy, active, fulfilling lives. Her scientifically gifted daughter, Tillie, is a mystery to her, and her dull-witted daughter, Ruth, is a constant reminder of her own doomed existence. The emptiness of Beatrice's life results in her cruelty to her daughters. Anything that Beatrice cannot intellectually understand, she berates. She becomes a destroyer.

Like the mother in Cages of Glass, Flowers of Time, Beatrice has tender moments. We are often touched by her vulnerability. Life has been cruel to both of these women and the reader can see and understand their suffering. In both cases it is self-hatred and emptiness that force them to behave so brutally toward their children. In the first book the cruelty is physical. In this play it is emotional. The pain inflicted on the children is the same.

The play ends on a note of hope. Mr. Goodman, Tillie's science teacher, has encouraged her in spite of Beatrice. Tillie's love of science has enabled her to see the beauty and importance of every living thing:

> "But most important, I suppose, my experiment has made me feel important--every atom in me, in everybody, has come from the sun--from places beyond our dreams. The atoms of our hands, the atoms of our hearts...Atom. Atom. What a beautiful word." (p.109)

SEXUAL ABUSE

Hatter Fox (readability level 7th grade) by Marilyn Harris is a novel which was written for the adult market, but, because of its adolescent heroine, it is popular with teenagers. According to the Human Ecology Forum, a quarterly publication of the New York State College of Human Ecology, there are three arenas where child abuse occurs: in the home, in institutions responsible for children, and in society.[6] In Hatter Fox we see abuse in every arena of Hatter's life.

Hatter is a young Navajo girl who is treated with utter contempt by both whites and Indians. She has no memory of her parents. Her earliest memories are of living with an elderly Indian woman in a hogan. When this woman dies, Hatter is taken in by another Indian family. There she is unjustly accused of killing one of the children and, as punishment, she is tied down beside the corpse and left to die. Her misfortunes do not end when she is "rescued" and taken to a missionary school. There she is stripped and hung upside down from a tree as punishment for breaking rules which she cannot begin to understand. She is ultimately raped by the "reverend" running the missionary school. Hatter escapes from the school and lives by prostitution, drugs, and theft until she eventually ends up in a reformatory. There she is placed in solitary confinement, often strapped to a bed or table, and repeatedly raped by Claude, a brutal imbecilic guard.

As in each of the other novels, someone does ultimately care. Hatter is slowly nursed back to mental and physical health by a white doctor, a member of the establishment. Unfortunately he fails to understand Hatter as Indian. It is his efforts to teach Hatter to live in a white society which ultimately result in her death. In a society where individualism is purported to be one of our highest values, it is, indeed, ironic that we are so intolerant of differences. It is this intolerance which destroys Hatter Fox.

Prior to the late 1960's most novels written for adolescents presented a sugar-coated picture of life. People assumed that unwanted difficulties and complexities would disappear if they were removed from our field of vision. This was wrong, of course. Much of the literature written for teenagers did little to help them come of age. Now young adult literature has "come into its own" and life is portrayed with all of its problems and blemishes. Once taboo subjects such as sex, death, illness, and child abuse are now being discussed honestly in the literature. The novel that affirms the best in human beings in spite of the ills of society represents adolescent literature at its best. Most of the novels I have discussed here fit into this category.

Additional Adolescent Novels Dealing With Child Abuse

Bradbury, Bianca. *Those Traver Kids*.
Coolidge, Olivia Ensor. *Come By Here*.
D'Ambrosio, Richard. *No Language But a Cry*.
Elliott, David W. *Listen to the Silence*.
Eyerly, Jeannette. *See Dave Run*.
Fenisong, Ruth. *Boy Wanted*.
Greene, Bette. *Summer of My German Soldier*.
Guy, Rosa. *The Friends*.
Holland, Isabelle. *Alan and the Animal Kingdom*.
Hunt, Irene. *The Lottery Rose*.
Johnston, Norma. *Glory in the Flowers*.
Jordan, June. *His Own Where*.
MacPherson, Margaret McLean. *The Rough Road*.
Norris, Gunilla Brodde. *Take My Walking Slow*.
O'Hanlon, Jacklyn. *Fair Game*.
Rabe, Bernice. *Rass*.
Sachs, Marilyn. *A December Tale*.
Smith, Doris Buchanan. *Tough Chauncey*.

FOOTNOTES

1. Office of Human Development Services (HEW), *New Light on an Old Problem*, Washington, D.C.: Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978, p.5.

2. Vincent J. Fontana, *Somewhere a Child Is Crying*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1973, p. 40.

3. Office of Human Development Services (HEW), *op*. *cit*., p. 7.

4. All readabilities cited in this paper have been computed using the Harris-Jacobson Readability Formula. The variables in this formula are the percent of unfamiliar words (a word is considered familiar if it is found on the Harris-Jacobson Short Readability Word List) and average sentence length.

5. Fontana, *op*. *cit*., p. 65.

6. Peter Drotman and Michael S. Goldstein, "Viewpoint: Institutions Are Abusive," *Human Ecology Forum*, 8, Summer 1977, p. 2.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

A Chance Child by Jill Paton Walsh.
Avon, 1980. 139 pp. $1.95.

Fantasy, social commentary, historical fiction, suspense--all could be classifications for A Chance Child, yet none would be precisely correct, for this novel goes beyond any attempt at classifying. A Chance Child is a shocking novel, but even that term--shocking--would be a cliché in this context. Walsh's major character is named Creep, the only name used by his mother the few times she refers to him. He has spent most of his five or six years (his age is never conclusively stated) locked away in a closet, fed only by his brother Christopher with meals he himself hasn't finished. The novel's opening scene finds Creep in a garbage dump, breaking free from the cardboard box in which his mother had thrown him away. Once free, he journeys down the Thames River in London back to the nineteenth century, and there discovers a world where children are treated as cruelly as he has been. Alternating chapters between Creep witnessing life in the nineteenth century and Christopher looking for his brother in the twentieth, Jill Paton Walsh shows, with devastating clarity, that elements of a time thought long past are still with us. The harsh reality of the abused child is as alive today as are the novels of Charles Dickens. A Chance Child will point that fact out to any reader.

Reviewed by Michael J. Valovcin, Seymour High School, Seymour, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Bridge To Terabithia, by Katherine Paterson.
Avon Camelot, 1979. 128 pp. $1.50.

With mastery and depth, Katherine Paterson portrays the special friendship of two fifth graders--Jess Aarons, a shy, sensitive farm boy, and Leslie Burk, his urbane, adventurous new neighbor. At first bewildered by this city girl who can outrun him, who calls her parents "Judy" and "Bill," and who can weave spontaneous fairy tales, Jess come to cherish Leslie as the spark that ignites his drab, chore-laden life. Together they create Terabithia, a magical haven in the near-by woods, accessible only by a rope swung ever a creek. Here they weave stories and find sanctuary from his harsh family and her hostile classmates. This Newbery Award winner is a study in ironic contrasts, the most dramatic of which is seeing the fragile beauty of Terabithia transformed into Leslie's watery grave as the rope swing gives way and she drowns. It is also a timely and positive study of a child's learning to cope with death. Jess's reaction begins in shock, disbelief, and anger and ends in acceptance, as he shares with his younger sister, Leslie's legacy to him--a love of beauty and learning. Because the superbly crafted imagery, foreshadowings, and symbolism might be lost on some readers, I'd recommend this book for mature fifth graders and middle schoolers.

Reviewed by Barbara Guerra, Newington High School, Newington, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Toby Lived Here by Hilma Wolitzer.
Bantam, 1980. 92 pp. $1.75.

After twelve-year-old Toby and her younger sister lose their adored father to death and then their strong, carefree moether to grief, the girls are placed in foster care with an elderly couple on Long Island, away from their city neighborhood. Toby finds herself anchorless in an alien environment, seemingly deserted by those whom she loved. In her resolve to cling to her old life, she turns inward, rejecting her friendly foster parents' overtures. The separation aspect of the adolescent's emotional passage underscores the events in this book. Eventually Toby finds her growing acceptance of her new environment as frightening as was her initial separation from her familiar world. Several scenarios present the adolescent's emotional travails — a spectrum which covers confusion, withdrawal, attachment, rejection, and growth during her journey. Wolitzer's treatment of the adolescent's passage is not unlike some others. But Toby Lived Here differs because it also describes the displacement of a child who, once happy at home, finds contentment in foster care and must deal with divided loyalties. In this, Toby Lived Here may fill a gap in the literature for an increasing number of junior high students.

Reviewed by Chris Sullivan, Plainville High School, Plainville, CT.

The Black Teenager in Young Adult Novels by Award-Winning Authors

Rosalie Black Kiah

In a pluralistic society where racial, cultural and social diversities abound, each group eventually develops traditions and special interests. Within each group there is exhibited mutually shared experiences that are unique to and characteristic of people of relatively the same background. It is the sharing of these experiences that provides a cohesiveness, or feeling of togetherness to a particular group. These experiences become crucial or salient to the members of the group as they strive to maintain and preserve that which gives them a sense of worth and self-identification.

Identity and self-esteem of Black children has been the subject of a number of studies. Ward and Braun[1] conducted a study on the self-esteem and racial preference in Black children. This team of researchers administered an adaptation of the Clark and Clark doll test, using puppets instead of dolls (one black and one white) to test sixty Black girls and boys between the ages of seven and eight. The group was equally divided between suburban and inner-city school children. The results in no way parelleled those of the Clarks'. Instead, Ward and Braun found that Black children growing up since 1963 rejected the white models in preference to the black models. This led the researchers to conclude that various social changes, as well as social and political movements (i.e., "Black awareness movement"), have been effective in causing these children (who are now 16 and 17 years old) to identify and adopt their own group as acceptable.

Capitalizing on this study and similar ones, the sixties and seventies saw an outpouring of Black-oriented books for children. More and more writers of fiction and poetry offered to the Black child an alternative to his/her reading fare; biographies and information books were also well represented. As a result, the market was flooded with "made-to-order" books about Blacks that generated a great deal of controversy, particularly among segments of the Black community. The controversy dealt with the invalid image of the "collective experiences" of Black people.

What then are these "collective experiences?" They are what this writer chooses to call the "salient shared experiences." By definition, they are those dominant beliefs, values, cultural and institutional arrangements that are shared by the majority of the Black population. These institutional arrangements include: the family, the social world, and the world of work.

An examination of sociological research reports reflecting the "salient shared experiences" of Black people in the United States reveals that the study of Black family life has received

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extensive attention from social scientists and accounts for the volumes of work done in this area. The *social world* of Black people was examined next and found to be divided into two subgroups: Interim Institutional Arrangements (Formal Groups) and Leisure-Time Activities (Informal Groups).

The "Black Church" is the second most important institution in the Black community. It is a formal arrangement and second in importance only to the family. Leisure-Time Activities, which are informal arrangements, consist of "the Street" or "the Block" (which is a social institution frequented by people at all ages) and group socialization.

Probably the activity that Blacks participate in most readily is work, because work is a major indication of one's well being, status, and future outlook and constitutes those activities people engage in to make a living. Hence the third category of institutional arrangements is the *world of work*.

Against this backdrop, this writer carefully extracted statements and phrases from sociological studies that revealed salient shared experiences of Black people in the *family setting* and the *social world* (including the *world of work*) and placed them in "direction" categories (favorable, unfavorable, and neutral). The purpose was to analyze the effects these experiences had on young adult protagonists in fictional accounts.

The books for analysis had to meet the following criteria:

1. They were limited to those that were classified as contemporary realistic fiction written for young people of approximately twelve to sixteen years of age.

2. Consideration was limited to fiction bearing a publication date between 1964 and 1979, with the former date being an important date in the history of Black people (i.e. the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act). No poetry, drama, historical fiction, fantasy, biographies, or factual books were used in the study.

3. The protagonist had to be Black and the main action of the story had to focus on Black people.

4. Only those books that had received significant literary awards or were written by authors who had received such awards in the past years (before 1964) were considered.

5. The action in these stories had to take place in contemporary times. This action should have parelleled the publication date but not have preceded the last twenty-five years.

6. Text of the stories were used to gather the data. Illustrations were not considered as a means for gathering data.

Over eighty titles met the first five criteria with only 35 books receiving significant literary awards or having been written by award-winning authors who had previously written books about Black people in the United States. The annotations that follow are representative of how the Black teenager is depicted in young adult novels by award-winning authors.

Bonham, Frank. Durango Street. Rufus Henry has only been released from the forestry camp two days when he finds himself in trouble with the Gassers, an organized fighting gang. He has been warned by his parole officer to stay out of trouble and away from gangs, but Rufus knows that the only way to survive in the Durango Housing Project is to join a gang. He moves on to become headman of the Moors. Fighting gangs are the central focus of this story.

________. Mystery of the Fat Cat. When fire destroys the Dogtown Boys Club, Buddy Williams and three of his friends look toward the inheritance that will come to the Boys Club as a resource for rebuilding the club. This inheritance can only be collected after the death of a rich, fat cat. They begin to put together evidence that will prove that the fat cat is dead and has been replaced by another cat. Adventures abound. Many references to family unity are made as well as references to leisure-time activities for youth.

________. The Nitty Gritty. The hopes and dreams of Charlie Matthews go unnoticed by his mother and father, but not by his teacher, Mr. Toia. Frequent visits by his Uncle Baron are always well received by Charlie who plans to travel with his uncle the next time he comes to visit the family. Family and kinship bonds are highlighted in this story.

________. Cool Cat. The teenager and the world of work are the focus of this story as Buddy Williams and his friends initiate a hauling service to earn extra money. Organized gang behavior is highlighted in this story but not towards violence.

________. Hey, Big Spender! Cool Hankins is selected by Breathing Man to distribute a half-million dollars to needy people in the community. One adventure leads to another as Cool goes about his appointed task. References made to family life and the world of work in this story.

________. The Golden Bees of Tulami. Cool Hankins, a high school senior and city boxing champion, is being pressured by Turk Ransom, the leader of nine Dogtown gangs to join up. Cool is against joining gangs as well as fearful of the powerful Turk. A handsome African on a mysterious mission with a hive of golden bees steps in just when all seems lost. Aside from organized gang behavior, kinship bonds are evidenced in this story.

Graham, Lorenz. North Town. David Williams and his family move to North Town from the South after several unpleasant experiences with prejudice and violence. They find that the differences are not that great in the North. This is a very moving story of family life and the world of work as David becomes head of the house during the prolonged illness of his father.

________. Whose Town? Racial tension is the theme of this story as David Williams and his friends are attacked by a group of young white boys at a carry-out restaurant. Family strength and unity are highlighted in the story.

________. Return to South Town. This novel rounds out the two above and an earlier one, South Town (Follett, 1958). It is the powerful story of David Williams and his return to the community that he left as a teenager.

Greenfield, Eloise. Sister. This novel embraces many aspects of the human experience--life, death, love, laughter, and sadness. All of these are carefully documented by thirteen year old Doretha (or "Sister" as she is known to the family) in a book she calls her "Doretha Book" as she observes her older sister withdraw from the family following the death of the father. Family strength and kinship bonds are present in this story.

Guy, Rosa. The Friends. Fourteen year old Phyllisia Cathy has just moved to Harlem from the West Indies. Her adjustment to school is slow, coupled with the problems of coping with her strict father. She is befriended at school by Edith Jackson, a very sloven and unkept girl. At first Phyl refuses Edith's friendship, but eventually she comes to rely on it. Family problems are highlighted in this story. The sequal to this book, Edith Jackson (Viking, 1978), is a moving story of a Black teenager who tries to keep her family together after the death of their parents.

Hamilton, Virginia. M. C. Higgins, The Great. Family life is the theme of this story as an Ohio hill boy tries to come to a decision about the future of his family and their home. Family unity is stressed throughout the story with an unusual relationship existing between father and son.

________. The House of Dies Drear. Thomas Small's father has a college teaching position in a town in Ohio and has bought an old house that once served as an Underground Railroad Station. Set in contemporary times, this is a suspenseful story of the Small family and their experiences in Dies Drear's old house. The Black church receives attention in the story, together with emphasis on strong family ties.

________. The Planet of Junior Brown. The major theme of this story is survival. Buddy, a "street child," befriends obese Junior Brown. After several traumatic experiences with his mother and his piano teacher, Junior collapses. It is at this point that Buddy takes him to one of his "planets," an underground hideout for homeless children. The message is friendship and brotherhood and although the boys are Black, the author does not give the story a racial overtone. The "street" is highlighted in this story as unwanted and minunderstood children band together to help each other.

________. Zeely. Elizabeth "Geeder" Perry and her brother spend the summer on their uncle's farm. It is when Geeder finds a photograph of a Watusi queen in an old magazine that she is decidedly sure that Zeely Tayber, the girl on the next farm, is a direct descendent of this queen. This is the story of how Geeder is brought face-to-face with her African heritage.

Hunter, Kristin. Guests in the Promised Land. A collection of eleven short stories that tell of the experiences of Black teenagers and the way they cope with their environment. The stories run the gamut from domineering mothers to rival street gangs.

_________. The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou. Louretta Hawkins is torn between militancy and moderation in this story of Black life in the ghetto and the effect it has on the youth. Pride in heritage, gang behavior, family life, and the church are highlighted in this story.

Jordan, June. His Own Where. The focus of this story is on the universal experience of being in love. Buddy, sixteen, and Angela, fourteen, are in love. They turn their backs on society and begin to live their lives together in an abandoned house in the cemetary. A few references are made about kin sharing responsibility for child-rearing as Buddy finds himself on his own with his mother gone and his father hospitalized.

Lipsyte, Robert. The Contender. Alfred Brooks is a high school drop-out who has to make a decision between going straight or joining a gang. He lives with his aunt and his cousins in a Harlem apartment, works in a grocery store, and trains to be a boxer. This is a story of identity and survival and how nonconjugal members aid Alfred in making his decision. Visiting kin frequently is stressed in this story as Alfred, his cousins, and his aunt visit an aunt in Queens on a regular basis.

Mathis, Sharon Bell. Listen for the Fig Tree. This is a family story that centers around Marvina Johnson, a Black sixteen-year-old blind girl, and her widowed mother. The story takes place during the Christmas holiday which marks the year-old murder of Marvina's father. Her mother turns to drinking in her grief and Marvina is torn between remaining home with her mother or attending her first Kwanza, an African harvest celebration. Nonconjugal members are also highlighted in this story.

_________. Teacup Full of Roses. This is a family story about three brothers: Joe, Davey, and Paul. Joe, the middle son, is emotionally the strongest. He dropped out of school to help Davey the youngest get through high school and on to college. Davey is the youngest brother. He is smart and good at basketball. Paul, the oldest of the three boys, has just been released from the hospital after nearly dying from an overdose of drugs. Of the three boys, Paul is the mother's favorite. She makes no pretense about it as the events of the story unfold. An elderly aunt and an invalid father complete the composition of the household.

Myers, Walter Dean. Fast Sam, Cool Clyde and Stuff. Francis "Stuff" Williams, who is now eighteen, tells about the time when his family first moved to 116th Street. In this story, he recalls the friendships he made, the adolescent joys and grief, the "hanging around" on the steps or at the club, and his coming of age during the five years he lived in Harlem. The story tells of the teenage life styles as well as the families of these Harlem youngsters.

__________. Mojo and the Russians. Dean accidentally knocks Drusilla down while having a bicycle race with Kitty. Drusilla, a Mojo lady, vows to get the person responsible. Convinced that he has a voodoo spell on him, the gang devises a plan to "unfix" Dean from the spell placed on him by Drusilla. A humorous story that brings together teenagers bent on helping each other.

__________. The Young Landlords. This light-hearted story features the same teenagers from the other Myers' books. The new addition to the gang is Paul. The story is based on the acquisition of a slum building by the gang and their efforts at restoring it. An excellent example of nonviolent gang behavior.

Rodman, Bella. Lions in the Way. Eight Black students enroll in previously all white Fayette High School. The story is about the week-long events that changed the entire composition of the community. Although the main focus is on segregation in education, references are made to the families of the Black students as well as the Black church.

The implications of the findings and conclusions of this study indicate that writers of children's contemporary realistic fiction about Black people in the United States for the most part are serving as "reporters" on the aspects of the salient shared experiences of Black people as they "see" them. Basically, the authors are saying that all people regardless of their race, national origin, or ethnic affiliation have no distinctions in their experiences. Black people have a whole normative world and as such should be represented that way in the literature about Black people. The valued and protective attitudes toward kin and others who are not blood related is an example of this. Moreover, there is considerable flexibility in the roles assumed, and the emphasis is on the importance of the role rather than upon who performs it. These examples of salient shared experiences and others should be portrayed in such a way that the reader will recognize them as a source of cultural diversity that accounts for the greatness of our society.

Many of the authors of the stories tended to focus totally on the familial aspects of the salient shared experiences of Black people. The Black family is a very important institution in the Black community, but Black people do not exist just in the family.

Another important finding was that many of the writers are consistently writing about the deplorable ugliness of ghetto life. More writers need to present both sides of the issue, thereby presenting the "big picture," which would not result in "blaming the victim." Writer Frank Bonham, who had the largest number of titles represented in the study, does not provide a resource where a child can see himself and his people presented in a positive way. The Bonham books abound with stories on organized gang behavior and fighting gangs, an aspect that is not totally representative of the Black community. No doubt the children that Bonham patterns his protagonists after are those that he observed in his work at half-way houses in the Los Angeles-Watts area. Further, he wages an all out war on the Black male in most, if not all, of his stories. They are portrayed as absent fathers, hustlers, or uncles who are not to be trusted and fathers who show no interest in their child. These stories in no way provide good male role models for the Black child. There is little doubt that the popularity or exploitation found in the Bonham books has caused the Black child to read them in search of literature that purports to be like him only to find that this is not the truth but one of the many misrepresentations found in stories about Black people and Black life styles.

Many writers of stories about Black adolescents introduced social problems in their books, but they did not develop them to the extent that the child is able to gain from the experience. This was evidenced in A Hero Ain't Nothin' But A Sandwich, an impressionistic novel by Alice Childress. Benji, the protagonist, experiments with drugs and goes through all the manifestations that accompany it. However, the story ends without a resolution. Perhaps there are no easy solutions to this most difficult problem. Perhaps Ms. Childress is exercising her iconoclastic approach to the writing of fiction for teenage readers by presenting this open-ended story and thereby forcing the readers to come to grips with their own set of values. In either case, writers have an obligation to present to the youthful reader sufficient choices upon which to generate goals and values.

One book in the study that provided a good model for teenage boys, because of its duality of purpose, is The Contender by Robert Lipsyte. The book seeks to provide a source of identity for adolescent boys, while at the same time addressing itself to the specific problems of being Black and adolescent in a society where things and people are defined in certain ways.

Finally, to say that the stories highlighted here all failed to authentically portray those aspects of the salient shared experiences of Black people would be a grave injustice. The major catagories referred to earlier in the discussion (i.e. the family, the social world, and the world of work) were presented to some degree in most of the stories. Over half of the stories were more detailed in their portrayals of the salient shared experiences. These stories showed such aspects as:

-Families that were nuclear, extended and augmented where children were "absorbed" or informally adopted.

-Kin share responsibility for child-care and child-rearing practices exhibited by uncles and aunts (maternal and paternal).

-Non-conjugal members (be they relatives or friends) available to retain and insure the survival of the family through financial and/or emotional support.

- High achievement orientation for children as typical attitudes of parents and/or significant others.
- Teenagers participating habitually in loose, fluid, shifting bands, lacking regular leaders, well-defined membership, and clear-cut organization.
- The world of work restricted to the Black adult community where the Black youth is usually unemployed or underemployed.
- Involvement in the world of work replacing other social and recreational activities for Black adults and subsequently the youth.

The aspects above are representative of what the sociological research reports have found to be experiences that are salient and shared by most Black people. Absent proportionately from these stories was the prominent role of the church in the Black community together with mutual aid and faternal organizations. The later, also known as "lodges," are not as popular as they once were, but they still hold a role of prominence in some rural and urban areas. Hence there were noticeable gaps in the stories as the major focus centered around the protagonists existing exclusively in the family with only fleeting attention given to other areas of Black life style.

Children's books that purport to be about Black people and, more specifically, Black adolescents must portray these shared experiences as a whole with authenticity. This is a must, because in addition to helping the Black child build an image of self and group in a positive manner, this literature will also serve as a vehicle for conveying accurate information to the non-Black child about the struggles of people whose racial and cultural differences and backgrounds account for the uniqueness of their experiences. Non-Black children will receive information that will enable them to empathize with people whose culture and heritage are different from their own, while at the same time promoting a better understanding of and appreciation for the uniqueness of Black people that manifests itself both culturally and historically. Award-winning books enjoy a wide distribution across the country and without a doubt must be held accountable.

FOOTNOTE

1. Susan H. Ward and John Braun, "Self-Esteem and Racial Preference in Black Children," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 42, July 1972, pp. 644-647.

New Views from Harlem — An Interview With Walter Dean Myers

Donald R. Gallo

Although Walter Dean Myers has written books for children as well as for adults, he is best known to teenage readers as the author of Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff; Mojo and the Russians; and It Ain't All for Nothin' as well as the high-interest, easy-reading science fiction story Brainstorm. An examination of any one of his novels reveals a view of Black life which is quite different from that of most other contemporary writers. Through a series of written interview questions, the Connecticut English Journal obtained the following insights about Mr. Myer's work.

CEJ: A large number of authors of young adult novels have written exclusively for teenagers. But you were a writer of adult fare as well as an editor before you turned to writing for young people. What kinds of things did you used to write? And what made you turn to writing YA novels?

MYERS: I wrote short fiction primarily. Some of it went to the Black magazines and a lot of it went to the men's magazines. I liked the short story form because of the latitude afforded the short story writer. Modern novels have to have certain commercial aspects to have a good shot at success. Young Adult books and books for younger children can cover a wider area than adult books. It can be argued that this is not true theoretically, but it certainly is true pragmatically.

CEJ: What are the rewards of writing for kids as opposed to adults?

MYERS: Children are our gifts to the future. To make this a better world for them, or to help them to make this a better world, is the greatest affirmation of life possible.

CEJ: On the basis of the mail you receive from young people, what do they seem to like and appreciate most about your writing?

MYERS: Young people seem to sift through stories and look for close relationships. This is what they almost always write to me about.

CEJ: What kinds of demands/expectations are made upon you as a writer because you are Black that might not be made if you were White?

MYERS: Like it or not, being in print makes me a representative of all Blacks. People who do not know Blacks personally get their ideas from the media. I'm forced to consider the images I project more than the White writer has to. Furthermore, because there are so few Black books being published I feel an obligation to "fill needs" rather than just "do my thing."

From a career standpoint I find myself boxed in to Black subjects, although my interests are not always identifiably Black.

CEJ: During the late 1960s and early 70s, so many of the books about Black characters written by Black writers dealt with the sordidness and frustrations of Black people living in big city ghettos. Claude Brown's first book, for example, described the terribly hopeless experiences of young kids with drugs, sex, stealing, etc. Although the main characters in your books are about the same age and come from about the same neighborhood as Brown's characters from the beginning of *Manchild in the Promised Land*, your teenagers are quite different. Why? Have times changed? Has the audience changed? Is one of you not being "honest" about life in Harlem?

MYERS: I'm the same age as Claude Brown and was raised in the same Harlem neighborhood. A casual examination of Harlem during the periods Mr. Brown and I have chosen to write about would clearly indicate that life was not as hopeless as Mr. Brown protrays, and that most people did not share his experiences. Langston Hughes also wrote about Harlem, as did Claude McKay and other Black writers. But during the sixties editors were approaching Black writers (and non-writers) to turn out books which would appeal to a largely white audience fully prepared to accept the exotic and distorted view of Black life that Mr. Brown offered in his book. People who would not accept such distortions about White life in America seem to find them quite plausible when applied to Blacks.

But the notion that people are willing to accept these distortions is no excuse for perpetuating them. My own books do not contain a full picture of Harlem, or of Black life, and were not intended to do so. But, more importantly, they do not contain the concept that we *accept* the negative features of our lives and communities any more than any other people.

CEJ: It is apparent from *Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff* as well as *Mojo and the Russians* that your novels for teenagers are intentionally about more positive, more enjoyable, more universal aspects of Black city life than have been the works of many other writers, whether Black, Hispanic, or Anglo. But there is a decided shift to more painful experiences and situations in *It Ain't All for Nothin'*. Is there a particular reason for the shift?

MYERS: Although the experience in *It Ain't All For Nothin'* was a more painful experience than I'd written about to that point, I felt that my main character did not glorify or accept his conditions. Tippy's fears and problems were handled in a way that allowed him to draw upon his strengths, and community strengths, as well as to succumb to his weaknesses.

CEJ: Unlike most other writers of books for young adults, you seem consciously to stay away from sex and strong language in your stories. Why?

MYERS: If a young person writes and says that they have learned to accept a fault, or be kind to an aging parent, or to avoid sexist behavior, most authors are willing to accept the credit for having taught something in their books. If, on the other hand, the same person writes and says that they are now pregnant because they did the same "beautiful thing that you described in the book," the writer will say that it wasn't their intent to teach easy sex. Of course not, but inclusion in the book makes it legitimate, doesn't it?

As far as profanity--I once thought that it mirrored actual speech to include it in my writing. I now suspect that what I'm actually recording is poor language facility, wherein profanity is substituted for language texture.

CEJ: Are there things you would like to write about in your books for adolescents that you feel inhibited from doing because of problems some of your contemporaries have had increasingly with censorship?

MYERS: I've had some of my books censored in some places. I'm not so much concerned with censorship as I am with some of the codes under which books are censored. A book dealing with the Black experience is censored because of a mild sex scene while a much racier novel dealing with the White experience is not censored. Much of the censoring is, I feel, a reaction to some of the books which librarians and schools felt forced to accept during the sixties.

CEJ: Who are your favorite authors (of any type of literature)?

MYERS: Balzac, France, Langston Hughes, Mark Twain, Gabriela Mistral.

CEJ: From what you've seen and from talking with teenagers and teachers, what do you feel is the value of YA books like yours and those of other YA authors (in contrast to what else is available to read--i.e. adult books and traditional classics)?

MYERS: When I was a child we made little attempt to educate everyone. Early on we were divided into categories such as "academics" or "vocationals," "college bound" or "industrial." The ones being educated made an easy transition (as do modern youngsters) from school texts to adult books, with an occasional visit to Mark Twain, Alcott, John R. Tunis and the like. Today we are trying to educate a much larger segment of our entire school population. The YA (I should say the less successful YA, a good one should be enjoyed by anyone) meets the needs of the large area of young people not ready for adult material but to whom we should still present the reading experience.

CEJ: Besides encouraging kids to buy and read your books, are there any other things you would like to see English teachers do (or not do!) with your novels?

MYERS: I would rather not have my books be made into a "chore." Some teachers don't understand that people read fiction because they enjoy the reading process as well as the material.

CEJ: What is your latest book about (and what's the title), and how does it differ from your previous YA publications?

MYERS: I have a new picture book that's just out: The Golden Serpent published by Viking Press. I'm just finishing a YA about a young Black knight which will be out in the fall. It's called The Legend of Tarik.

CEJ: A Black knight in shining armor! Marvelous! We will look forward to reading that. Thank you very much.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

It Ain't All For Nothin' by Walter Dean Myers.
Avon, 1979. 182 pp. $1.95.

Problems have a way of surfacing when you're twelve years old and live in a Harlem ghetto, but when you're forced to replace your old way of life with one you know is wrong, you're in trouble. Tippy's sense of purpose and direction flounders when his grandmother becomes ill and he must go to live with his father, Lonnie. The frustrating need for a hero as well as a father who will love and accept him leads Tippy deeper and deeper into Lonnie's pattern of aimless drinking and crime. Grandma Carrie's simple standards of right and wrong serve as the boy's conscience when he becomes irretrievably caught up in a robbery staged by Lonnie and his friends. The conclusion comes when Tippy finds the courage to do what has to be done to make things right. This credible story with an up-beat ending touches upon a number of ghetto situations: the frustration of unemployment, the lure of the "fast buck," the dilemma of the elderly poor, and the need for positive role models for adolescents. Tippy's strength comes in part from a loving grandmother, a loyal friend, and a supportive middle-aged couple who act as surrogate parents. A young man's recognition of his own special capabilities and at the same time his father's serious shortcomings can be jarring. But self-awareness holds promise for Tippy, who says,

> ...you can't go back to not knowing things,
> and the things you know about yourself is
> what makes you one way or the other.

Reviewed by Sheila Klem, Canton High School, Canton, CT.

Arguments and Tactics Used by Censors — A View from the Eye of One Hurricane

Jo Anne Rehberg

Teaching modern novels can be risky, and attacks on literature for adolescents have been increasing. Modern adolescent literature frequently comes under attack for several reasons; violence, explicit sexual scenes, profane language, controversial ideas, and a lack of sympathetic adult characters. Although I was aware of such criticism, I was relatively unfamiliar with the tactics of groups seeking to remove books from the curriculum. I was particularly surprised that a challenge to The Learning Tree would take place in our district.

BACKGROUND

Our school district seemed to be an unlikely choice for such an attempt. We had community support; our procedure for dealing with parent complaints had always solved most concerns about textbooks at the building level; and our high school staff chose novels carefully to meet the objectives of each course.

The Mead School District has 6,200 students and is located in a fairly affluent suburban area north of Spokane, Washington. The residents are generally well-educated and successful. Furthermore, they are articulate and not easily stampeded into attacking school curricula without serious cause. Our elected school board members and superintendent have built a high degree of trust and respect over the last five years. The only book controversy I recall is a bitter fight over the use of Catch 22 in a high school elective class prior to the hiring of this superintendent. The former administration was not nearly as capable, and at that time the district was more rural. Even with the earlier controversy, cooler heads prevailed, and the book is still a part of the curriculum.

The Learning Tree had been used in the district in some sections of sophomore English for at least five years without serious challenge. Sophomore English teachers have a list of eleven books to choose from, and normally each teacher selects three novels from this list. In any given semester, approximately one-half of the sections include this book. Consequently, a concerned parent could contact the school and arrange for a student to be placed in a section in which this book was not taught. A student could also request that an alternate book be assigned. Only two students had asked to be given an alternate over these years. Even during the height of the controversy, only a handful of students requested alternate books.

OBJECTIONS

The controversy began when two parents of Mead High School students registered a complaint with the high school principal.

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A conference was set up with each parent to discuss the situation. At these meetings, it was suggested that alternate books be assigned to those two students. The two parents did not accept this suggestion stating that they believed the book was offensive and inappropriate for any high school student. Since the principal would not agree to remove the book from the curriculum, they each wrote to the superintendent requesting that the book be removed from the sophomore English program. At this point, the two parents enlisted the help of two local ministers and a lawyer, who also wrote letters to the superintendent.

PROCEDURES

After attempts to satisfy the two original complainants were unsuccessful, a hearing committee was set to listen to both sides of the issue in an open meeting. I was asked to participate on the hearing board, along with two school board members, the assistant director of special education, and the assistant superintendent. The hearing board upheld the use of the book, which led to a presentation before the total school board. The school board upheld the findings of the hearing committee, which was the last step available within the district. Ultimately, parents have a right to initiate court action against the district if they choose.

There were three surprising elements in this experience: First, positive community support was in evidence. Second, the carefully prepared defense of the book by the Mead High School English Department had little impact on the participants, who concentrated on issues they considered most important to them. Third, the complaints concerning the specific content of the book at the first hearing were mostly dropped at the board hearing in favor of legalistic arguments.

The open public hearing proved that the movement to ban the book from sophomore English was small. Approximately 150 people attended the hearing and, judging by the applause, only about 20-30 people opposed the book. Many of these people were husband-wife teams, and some of them did not live in the district. Of the people who spoke against the book, four were residents, three were parents of Mead students, and four were non-residents. Those speaking for the book included three residents, four parents, and two non-residents. In addition, 11 students spoke in support of _The Learning Tree_.

ARGUMENTS

Arguments presented at the open hearing fell into four categories. I have included a description of these challenges because they represent the most sophisticated arguments, ones which need to be answered with a sophisticated defense. Obviously, a couple of speakers decried the influx of "Godless Communism and the moral decay of the American culture," but most of the speakers presented an articulate defense of their points of view. The following agruments were presented, with rebuttal from other community members. The staff was given no rebuttal time.

Argument #1: The overall value of a book cannot be judged without considering specific objectionable sections. Students are impressionable and will pay close attention to the more lurid parts of a book. Specific incidents and behavior in the book were described (and in some cases inaccurately described) to show that the main character behaved immorally. This was done very cleverly. For instance, the speaker related how Newt did not report a crime he had witnessed and went off to frolic in a swimming hole with his friends. The speaker did not mention, however, that Newt was distraught and wrestling with his own conscience because reporting the incident would have put him in personal danger and made him the target of attacks by other Blacks in the community. The speaker, furthermore, did not mention to the audience that Newt did eventually come forward and tell the truth, even at risk of personal injury. Other instances where the main character did not do the "right" thing immediately were related with a similar lack of attention to the ultimate outcome and Newt's final actions. The speaker argued that such instances by themselves render the book worthless because they encourage improper responses to crises.

Argument #2: There is no need to present a balanced view of disparate cultures and life styles. Students should only be exposed to "the good" and learn from examples of the finest behavior, not to "ugly," "immoral," or "the obscene." Books such as The Learning Tree only expose students to the wrong behaviors and values and encourage students to emulate such behavior, particularly since the book is assigned by teachers and therefore "promoted" by them.

Argument #3: Censorship is valuable and entirely appropriate. When teachers judge books, it is called "selection"; when parents do it, it is called "censorship." Teachers do not teach all books that are available to them; they make choices based on what they feel is appropriate for young people to read. Most speakers felt that books used in schools should be strictly censored.

Argument #4: Assigning alternate books to students who complain is not acceptable because those individuals are not given the classroom experience the others receive. An objectionable book should not be given to any student. Most students do not object because they feel they are at the mercy of the system. If alternate books exist to teach the same concepts, teachers should use them instead of objectionable materials.

After the hearing committee upheld the use of the book at the sophomore level, a presentation was made to the school board. Eleven supporters showed up to listen, and presentations were made by one parent, a lawyer, and one local minister. While the minister and parent still were speaking to the moral values of textbooks, the lawyer, who presented the longest speech, spoke to another issue. Prior to the school board meeting, I expected the specific content of The Learning Tree to remain the focus of attention throughout the battle. I was naively mistaken!

The attorney, whose role increased at each step, was not simply a family lawyer who had been retained by the complainants.

He is employed by Washington Citizens for a Moral Majority, which is loosely connected with other organizations nationwide that may carry a similar title. The same group has been involved in anti-abortion and anti-ERA movements in this state and probably nationwide.

None of the arguments stressed at the first hearing can be used as a basis for legal action against the district. Consequently, the change in strategy could be the nucleus of a legal challenge to the book. The attorney presented two arguments which supposedly proved that the Mead School District was violating the religious freedom of its students.

Argument #1: *Values clarification and situational ethics are taught in the schools*. According to the critics, these concepts teach students to do what is convenient rather than what is right, to develop their own values rather than accept "Christian values." They promote non-theism rather than theism, downgrading the role of the Judeo-Christian heritage of the United States. The connection between these "questionable" practices and *The Learning Tree* was not clearly explained, although Newt's "immoral" behaviors were mentioned in graphic detail with a casual concern for accuracy.

Argument #2: *Secular Humanism is unconstitutionally promoted by the schools*. The attorney seemed to believe that humanism as a philosophy and the religion called "Secular Humanism" are the same. He spent a considerable amount of time showing that "Secular Humanism" was a religion. Again, the connection between Secular Humanism and the book was unexplained.

These arguments do not appear legally sound. The attorney for the school district was consulted and felt that no constitutional issue existed. However, regardless of the merit of these issues, the potential for a legal hassle remains.

ISSUES AND INSIGHTS

After listening to the arguments at both meetings, I believe there is only one issue at stake. Who shall determine the curriculum, and on what basis shall it be determined? The complainants are really saying that the schools are teaching students improperly, choosing obscene materials to teach unacceptable points of view. They believe we have violated the public trust and are threatening the foundations of their religious beliefs. These concerns must be answered professionally, respecting the beliefs of those who disagree. Although the answers probably will not satisfy the critics, a calm, professional approach will impress those who support the school's position and persuade many who are neutral.

Fortunately, the complainants in my district do not represent a significant number of patrons. The superintendent and school board have represented the community well, communicated continually and openly with parents, and have earned the trust of most patrons. Both public hearings were handled calmly and all participants were treated respectfully. The differences of opinion were not resolved but a potentially explosive situation was avoided. This allowed teachers to present their case to the community without creating bitterness. The community support we had enjoyed was maintained and the number of critics did not increase.

IMPLICATIONS

I have learned three things from this experience that may be of value to others. First, my district was not immune to such a battle. One of two people can create controversy over novels that have been used successfully for years. Second, the people who criticize materials are probably sincere and have legitimate concerns that must be answered. It is not difficult for a small group of people to obtain legal help for their cause which increases the likelihood of legal action. Third, the community support can come to the defense of any novel more effectively than teachers and administrators.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Ludell by Brenda Wilkinson.
Bantam, 1980. 168 pp. $1.75.

Ludell, as described by the publisher's blurb, "is the story of a young black girl growing up in the rural poverty of Waycross, Georgia in the 1950's." Author Wilkinson most powerfully reveals this poverty by omissions. Despite the era in which this book is set, there is no mention of juke boxes, bobby sox, or rock and roll so typical of most teenagers' surroundings in the fifties. The much anticipated arrival of the family's first television set, that quintessential fifties symbol, only brings much disappointment when it is delivered broken and unusable. The family is also lacking the presence of any dominant male figure. Indeed, in the three years that we see of her life, Ludell is consumed with being raised by her grandmother in the absence of her mother who has gone North in search of the "good life." She also experiences her first love affair with Willie and the close friendship of Ruthie Mae. (Her relationship with Willie is the subject of a sequel, Willie and Ludell, to be published later.) Unfortunately, despite many concrete details and similarities to the author's own life, Ludell is lacking that sense of hard core reality one can find in such nonfiction genre as Richard Wright's autobiography Black Boy. Truth can indeed be stranger than fiction; perhaps in this case it also would have made for more powerful writing.

Reviewed by Judith L. Hinkle, Brien McMahon High School,
Norwalk, CT.

YA Books Worth Defending (and Censors Think Are Worth Attacking)

Kenneth Donelson

Way back in the November 1972 *English Journal*, I predicted that four areas of literature would increasingly come under the eagle eye of the censor. First, certain books were staples of both English teachers and censorial attacks, and inevitably those books were doomed to be under attack, books such as *The Grapes of Wrath*, *1984*, *Brave New World*, and *Catch-22*. Second, literature written specifically for adolescents, particularly books attempting to reflect reality, was likely to be attacked, works such as John Donovan's *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip*, Paul Zindel's *I Never Loved Your Mind*, and S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*. Third, antagonism toward racial and ethnic minorities was common, and attacks on books such as Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land*, Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*, and Vine Deloria's *Custer Died for Your Sins* were anticipated. Last, some magazines were so disliked by the right wing that censors were certain to come after *Time*, *Scholastic*, *Mad Magazine*, *Saturday Review*, *Nation*, and *Newsweek*.

I mention this not to establish my prophetic powers which are meager and highly unreliable, though I was unhappily right this one time, but to point out how incredibly limited my vision was in listing only four areas likely to come under attack. Ed Jenkinson listed fourteen areas by 1979 in "Dirty Dictionaries, Obscene Nursery Rhymes, and Burned Books,"[1] adding "secular humanism," literature by homosexuals, "negative statements about parents," "racist statements," and sex stereotypes to my puny list of four. Not content with that, Jenkinson increased the list to forty a bit later in 1979[2] adding sociology, anthropology, behavior modification, the occult, violence, revisionist histories, mythology, ecology, "books that do not champion the work ethic," "books that do not promote patriotism," and others to an impressively growing list. Not content with stopping there, Jenkinson found by May 1980[3] that his list had grown to sixty-seven, adding psychology, "substandard English," concrete poetry, "denial of the American heritage," science fiction, "invasions of family privacy," nudity, "near-nudity," "depressing thoughts," "negative thinking," and more, much much more. Either the censors' base of attacks had broadened almost geometrically, or Ed Jenkinson (and possibly the rest of us) had become more perceptive.

I offer all this as proof that the first assumption teachers should make about censorship is that *anything* is potentially censorable by someone, somewhere, sometime, for some reason. With the possible exception of a novel by Betty Cavanna or Anne Emery (and yes, they're still writing and publishing), it would seem that almost everything that could be censored has been.

In addition to being Professor of English at Arizona State University, Ken Donelson has been the editor of *Books for You*, the *Arizona English Bulletin*, and the *ALAN Newsletter* and is presently co-editor of *The English Journal*.

Nowhere is that more obvious than in books appealing to young adults, whether published by the juvenile division of a publishing house (therefore adolescent books) or by the adult branch (therefore adult books). A 1978[4] survey of materials widely censored in the United States found The Catcher in the Rye the most popular book with censors, hardly an eye-opener to English teachers or librarians, especially those who had followed state surveys of censorship. Others in the top five were Soul on Ice, Manchild in the Promised Land, Go Ask Alice, and Catch-22, again none of them at all surprising.

Some years back when adolescent literature remained pure and innocent and quite unrelated to reality, parents and administrators could have safely ignored the field. Rarely was an adolescent title questioned, except on purely literary grounds. Since 1967 with the publication of S. E. Hinton's The Outsiders and 1968 with Paul Zindel's The Pigman, adolescent novels have improved and censors have noticed the changes. Here are a few titles that have come under attack, though they were not necessarily banned.

BOOKS UNDER ATTACH FOR SEX, SUGGESTIVE SITUATIONS, OR DUBIOUS MORALITY:

1967--Anne Head's Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones
1968--Paul Zindel's The Pigman
1969--John Donovan's I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip
    Paul Zindel's My Darling, My Hamburger
    Nora Stirling's You Would If You Loved Me
1970--Barbara Wersba's Run Softly, Go Fast
    Paul Zindel's I Never Loved Your Mind
1971--June Jordan's His Own Where
    Jean Renvoize's A Wild Thing
1972--Jeannette Eyerly's Bonnie Jo, Go Home
    Lynn Hall's Sticks and Stones
    Isabelle Holland's The Man Without a Face
    Johanna Reiss' The Upstairs Room
    Norma Klein's Mom, the Wolfman and Me
    Jean Craighead George's Julie of the Wolves
1973--John Neufeld's For All the Wrong Reasons
1974--Sandra Scoppettone's Trying Hard to Hear You
1975--Judy Blume's Forever
1976--Richard Peck's Are You in the House Alone?
    Rosa Guy's Ruby
    John Steptoe's Marcia
1977--Gunnel Beckman's That Early Spring
    Sidney Offit's What Kind of Guy Do You Think I Am?
1978--Fran Arrick's Steffie Can't Come Out to Play
    Aidan Chambers' Breaktime
    Deborah Hautzig's Hey, Dollface
    Susan Shreve's Love Letters
    Sandra Scoppettone's Happy Endings Are All Alike
1979--David Rees' Quintin's Man

BOOKS UNDER ATTACK FOR VIOLENCE OR A DEPRESSING PICTURE OF LIFE

1967--S. E. Hinton's The Outsiders
    Robert Lipsyte's The Contender
1968--Nat Hentoff's I'm Really Dragged But Nothing Gets Me Down

1968--Paul Zindel's The Pigman
1969--A. E. Johnson's A Blues I Can Whistle
1970--George Cain's Blueschild Baby
    Barbara Wersba's Run Softly, Go Fast
1971--Go Ask Alice
    John Donovan's Wild in the World
    Nat Hentoff's In the Country of Ourselves
    S. E. Hinton's That Was Then, This Is Now
    John Neufeld's Sleep, Two, Three, Four!
1972--Robert Newton Peck's A Day No Pigs Would Die
1973--Alice Childress' A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich
    John Donovan's Remove Protective Coating a Little at a Time
1974--Robert Cormier's The Chocolate War
    Peter Davies' Fly Away Paul
    Getrude Samuels' Run, Shelley, Run
    William Sleator's House of Stairs
    Felice Holman's Slake's Limbo
    Scott O'Dell's Child of Fire
1975--Kin Platt's Headman
    S. E. Hinton's Rumble Fish
    Paige Dixon's May I Cross Your Golden River?
    Barbara Wersba's The Country of the Heart
    M. E. Kerr's Is That You, Miss Blue?
1976--Winifred Rosen's Cruisin for a Bruisin
    Sandra Scoppettone's The Late Great Me
    Robert Westall's The Machine Gunners
1977--Roy Brown's The Cage
    Charles P. Crawford's Letter Perfect
    John Gordon's The Ghost on the Hill
    Robert Cormier's I Am the Cheese
1978--Michael de Larrabeitti's The Borribles
    Scott O'Dell's Kathleen, Please Come Home!
    Lois Duncan's Killing Mr. Griffin
1979--Robert Cormier's After the First Death
    Jane Gardam's God on the Rocks
    Kin Platt's The Ape Inside Me
    T. Ernesto Bethancourt's Nightmare Town

RECENT ATTACKS

In 1980 alone thus far (and I write this in July), I've read reports about censorship (or attempted censorship) of these books, all read by young adults.

January--North Jackson, Ohio: The School Board ordered the removal of The Catcher in the Rye, Go Ask Alice, Manchild in the Promised Land, Slaughterhouse-Five, To Sir With Love, and Up the Down Staircase from library shelves. The secretary of the executive committee of the local Citizens for Decency Through Law, a minister, said, "The Bibles are gone, but the filth and obscenity are there to read."

February--Fort Myers, Florida: Members of Decency in Education asked school board members to remove Catch-22, Soul on Ice, and The Catcher in the Rye from libraries. One man announced, "Something is wrong with our school system."

Greensboro, North Carolina: The Superintendent of Schools supported the banning of Theodore Weesner's *The Car Thief* after a committee recommended it be retained. "I disagree with the Committee ruling that the book was appropriate for senior high schools and ordered it be withdrawn and destroyed."

Kanawha, Iowa: The School Board discussed banning *The Grapes of Wrath* after parental complaints that the book was "profane, vulgar, and obscene." The Board President announced that our country was going "pell mell downhill morally" and the town had a chance to help reverse the trend by banning the book.

March--Midland, Michigan: A Citizens' Committee recommended that *The Merchant of Venice* be dropped from Midland High School English classes as anti-Semitic.

Continental, Ohio: The School Board removed *Of Mice and Men* from the Freshman English classes and placed the book on reserve making it available only with parental permission. A minister of a local church said the book "degraded the name of God."

April--Whiteville, North Carolina: A mother was disturbed when her twelve-year-old daughter checked *Wifey* out of the local library. She complained; the library staff evaluated and kept the book and compromised by requesting that young people must have parental permission to check out adult books. The library also reclassified the *Bible* (on reading level) and placed it in the adult collection. The mother said, "I think the library is just doing this for a comeback."

May--Cromwell, Connecticut: A teacher ordered a class set of *Julie of the Wolves* for her fifth grade, then read it, and decided the passage about Julie's husband's attack on Julie was too frightening. The Superintendent read the passage, shipped the class set back, and argued that there was no censorship involved. The School Board unanimously supported his action.

June--Concord, California: Citizens for Improvement of Our Schools attacked *MS. Magazine* and urged a ban by schools. "Our basic stand is in opposition to vulgarity and obscenity." A local minister said that *MS.* had "no esthetic values or ethical standards." A mother said "The total philosophy of *MS. Magazine* is a putdown of moral and social values." The School Board compromised by requiring that all students must have parental permission to read *MS*.

Fremont, Nebraska: Concerned Parents attacked Shel Silverstein's *Where the Sidewalk Ends* because they believed "the school system has the responsibility to reinforce what we're trying to teach our children." The School Board retained the book.

> Johnston, Illinois: Parents and the music/youth director of a local church objected to *The Ox-Box Incident* because there were "several profane words throughout the book." This incident actually proved helpful to me since I was in nearby Carbondale trying to figure out a way of opening a speech for that night when I spotted the account in the June 4 *Southern Illinoisan*, the only time I can remember being grateful to censors.

THE CENSORS

Who are the censors? Ed Jenkinson lists many in *Censors in the Classroom: The Mind Benders*[5]: parental and citizen groups like Parents of New York United (PONYU), Educational Research Analysts (Mel and Norma Gabler of Texas), Eagle Forum, Heritage Foundation, People of America Responding to Educational Needs of Today's Society (PARENTS), Billy James Hargis' Christian Crusade, Citizens for True Freedom, Decency in Education, and Let Our Values Emerge (LOVE). Fear of education as opposed to indoctrination is common as Leo Kneer found when he talked to a member of a state board of education who said, "I do not want my junior high youngster to think--I want him conditioned."[6] Administrators have often been censors or at least are seen by teachers as quiet supporters of censors. One assistant principal was quoted locally as having said, "We don't wish to have any controversial books in the bookstore or in the library." The responses of teachers to both surveys of censorship in Arizona in 1968[7] and 1974[8] indicated how fearful they were that administrators would not support them if censorship struck. Comments like these were almost commonplace: "He doesn't believe we should use anything more extreme than *Silas Marner*." "He hates teachers who make waves." "He would agree with the parents and then demand that I remove the offensive material." "He sides where the greatest political power is."

But English teachers and librarians also sometimes actively censor. In the survey of Arizona censorship in 1968, one English teacher responded, "The English teacher is hired by the school board which represents the public. The public, therefore, has the right to ask any English teacher to avoid using any material repugnant to any parent or student." Another said, "The Board of Education knows what parents in our area want their children to read. If teachers don't feel they can teach what the parents approve, they should move on." I thought those were bad enough until I read three comments by Connecticut English Department Chairs. "If the teachers were well educated, the material they chose would be of a calibre which precludes objection, or if objections are raised they'd be easily met by me." "At this level I don't feel it's a problem. We don't deal with controversial material, at least not in English class." "We have no problems at all in my department. The teachers order books directly and don't have to clear them with me or with a committee. But I receive the shipments. Copies of books that I think to be inappropriate simply disappear from the book room."[9] While librarian censorship is not all that hard to find, one of the better examples came in reaction to one of Patty Campbell's "The YA Perplex" columns in the *Wilson Library Bulletin* in December 1978. Campbell questioned whether language and sex problems didn't carry a disproportionate weight with some librarians in selecting books, particularly adolescent literature.[10] A Pennsylvania school librarian responded with annoyance.

> I am a senior high librarian. I also played four years of college football and have been coaching high school football for 11 years. I know what goes on and what is said inside locker rooms and on street corners. I'm not a naive social recluse, believe me. On the other hand I have a philosophy of what it should be like within the walls and pages (especially pages) of a library. Two different worlds? You bet.
>
> . . .
>
> Do I want our teens to see a sugarcoated world through rose-colored glasses? Why not? Is there anything wrong with reading about the good things that happen? After finishing a book, is it wrong to have an honest-to-goodness warm feeling because something nice happened in it. Is it wrong for a character of fiction to say 'gosh darn' instead of 'damn it'?
>
> In my library censorship lives, and I'm not ashamed or afraid to say it, either. I have books like The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear on my shelves, but these are few and far between. To all you so-called liberal librarians out there in city or country school now condemning this letter, I say to you: 'The kids of today are great! Do you want to help give them a boost or a bust?'[11]

One school librarian recently told me, disgust spreading over her face, that all her students wanted to read or talk about was cars and sex and sports. Perhaps she was right, but I couldn't help but wonder what most adults would do for conversation if all three topics were suddenly banned throughout the country.

TEN DEFENSIBLE AUTHORS

What is defensible is something each librarian and English teacher will have to work out alone. Ten novelists seem eminently defensible and even valuable for both libraries and English classrooms. All ten have come under attack or seem excellent candidates for the censors' wrath. All ten are worth knowing. The novels of all ten are likely to have considerable adolescent appeal.

Robert Cormier's The Chocolate War (1974), I Am the Cheese (1977), and After the First Death (1979) have been understandably much praised. Some people find Cormier's books depressing. I think they are honest appraisals of the world and our willingness to try to manipulate other human beings.

Jay Daly's Walls (1980) is a new book about our ambivalent goodness and depravity with some graphic and quite legitimate sensuality. Daly has written, as the saying goes, a flawed but impressive first novel.

Terry Davis' Vision Quest (1979) covers a short time when Louden Swain, eighteen-year-old high school wrestler, prepares for a match and embraces life through literature and love and his vision quest. A quiet, non conflict-riddled book (indeed, there may be too little conflict), Vision Quest has already raised some provincial eyebrows.

Rosa Guy's Ruby (1976), Edith Jackson (1978) and The Disappearance (1979) mark her as an extraordinarily gifted writer, but all three books have caused some problems some places, particularly Ruby for its portrayal of lesbianism.

William Hogan's The Quartzsite Trip (1980) is about brilliant and popular English teacher P. J. Cooper and his planning of yet anothertrip to Quartzsite, Arizona, with thirty-six seniors from John Muir High School in Los Angeles. Although it is a sometimes irritating first novel (Cooper may irritate more readers than he pleases and Hogan's use of repetition in overdone), kids may learn something about life and themselves through the book.

After Mom, the Wolfman and Me (1972), Norma Klein went downhill with Taking Sides (1974) and Hiding (1976) and It's Okay If You Don't Love Me (1977), but Love Is One of the Choices (1978) is refreshingly honest, and the story of two close friends, Caroline and Maggie, and their first sexual loves, each quite different, struck me as honest and worth reading and defending if need be.

Harry Mazer's The Last Mission (1979) is the best in a series of excellent novels by Mazer. But some of the language rings true to war and hell and it probably will offend some people.

Norma Fox Mazer's Up in Seth's Room (1979) is the latest in a string of critical successes and popular novels. This one was most impressive for its picture of a young girl physically mature enough to handle sex but emotionally unwilling to start, all without being prudish. To my surprise the book has been hassled for its too graphic picture of the substitute the young lovers find for sexual intercourse.

Scott Spencer's Endless Love (1979) is the most impressive book I've read in the last two years. I wondered if young adults would like it, but the book is listed by G. Robert Carlsen in the 1980 Books for Young Adults Book Poll (University of Iowa) to be printed in the November 1980 English Journal. David Axelrod's passionate love for Jade Butterfield consumes him and almost literally consumes Jade's family. It is sensual and odd and ultimately moving.

John Yount's Hardcastle (1980) is new and impressive. Billy Music, a wanderer in 1931 Depression, becomes a part of a union-management fight in a novel about youth, love, friendship, and loyalty. The book is too new, too unknown to have caused problems thus far. It may.

THE FUTURE

Where are we heading in censorship of young adult literature? As I said before, my prophetic gifts are unreliable, but I doubt censorship will diminish, and I'm unhappily confident it will get worse. About the only thing I'm sure of is that censorship episodes will surprise me, not because they happen but because a book is attacked from a new and unexpected direction or a book I thought reasonably safe comes under attack. Things change and they stay the same.

Several months ago a librarian friend from Tucson told me a true story that had surprised her, and I repeat it because it says something about censorship though precisely what it says I do not know. A father caught his son apparently reading a copy of _The Catcher in the Rye_ and was about to point out that the boy could read the book openly without offending anyone in the family. Before he could get the words out, the father realized _The Catcher_ seemed thicker than he remembered. Then he discovered his son was using Salinger's book as a cover, literally and figuratively, for a copy of Terry Southern's _Candy_. As I said, I think that proves something. I wish I could figure out just what.

FOOTNOTES

1. In James E. Davis, Editor, _Dealing with Censorship_, Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1979, pp.2-13.

2. "Protest Groups Exert Strong Impact," _Publishers Weekly_, 216, October 29, 1979, pp. 42-44.

3. "Sixty-seven Targets of the Textbook Protestors," _Missouri English Bulletin_, 38, May 1980, pp. 27-32.

4. L. B. Woods, "The Most Censored Materials in the U.S.," _Library Journal_, 103, November 1, 1978, pp. 2170-2173.

5. Edward B. Jenkinson, _Censors in the Classroom: The Mind Benders_, Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979.

6. Leo. B. Kneer, "Censorship: A Publisher's View," _Arizona English Bulletin_, 17, February 1975, p. 104.

7. "Censorship and Arizona Schools: 1966-1968," _Arizona English Bulletin_, 11, February 1969, pp. 28-44.

8. "Censorship and Arizona English Teachers, 1971-1974," _Arizona English Bulletin_, 17, February 1975, pp. 1-39.

9. Diane P. Shugert, "Censorship in Connecticut," _Connecticut English Journal_, 9, Spring 1978, pp. 59-61.

10. Patty Campbell, "The YA Perplex," _Wilson Library Bulletin_, 53, December 1978, pp. 340-341.

11. _Wilson Library Bulletin_, 53, February 1979, p. 421.

Using Realistic Language in YA Books

Robin Brancato

Although I feel that to some extent the language in my novels should serve as a model, I am not willing to sacrifice realism in my writing. That brings up the very knotty question that almost every writer for young people faces: should you have your characters saying "He don't do this," "Me and Jimmy's goin' to the movies," and so on? Or will expressions like that further corrupt the language which is already threatened by corruption?

I have weighed this very seriously, because the English teacher part of me wants everything that I write to be something that can be used as a model. The writer part of me wants to be realistic and convincing. So I've dealt with this problem right along. The best way I can tell you how I try to resolve this problem is to share with you a letter I got from a student--a critical letter--and the response I wrote to this boy.

This letter came to me from Wisconsin. It was written on December 1, 1978. It says:

> Dear Mr. (*sic*) Brancato:
>
> I am an eighth grade student at Marshfield Junior High School in Marshfield, Wisconsin, and recently I read your novel *Winning*. I enjoyed the story but was offended by the bad language. I think the story would have the same impact without the bad language. It's my feeling that authors today think that bad language and sex are needed to keep the reader's interest. I disagree and I know that other students feel the same way I do. I would be very interested in hearing your reasons for your choice of words. If you can find the time, please write and let me know how and why you chose the words you do.
>
> Your truely, (*sic*)
> Shawn Mitchell

Usually people say, "What bad language in *Winning*?" Most people can't remember that there is any. So, for those of you who aren't familiar with the book, I would say there is a minimal amount of language that could give offense to anyone.

I assumed "Shawn" was a boy, but of course he assumed I was a boy, too, so, who knows what Shawn really is. This was my response to Shawn:

Former English teacher Robin Brancato is the author of several noteworthy books for young adults, including *Winning*, *Blinded by the Light*, and most recently *Come Alive at 505*. This article was excerpted from a presentation Ms. Brancato made last spring at Central Connecticut State College.

Dear Shawn:

Your letter concerning language in young adult novels is interesting and pertinent. I agree that choice of language is often a problem for writers of books for young people. I suppose I don't like "bad language" any more than you do. The main trouble with it, from my point of view, is that it's unimaginative, boring, and lazy. In conversation it often fills in where original and interesting language ought to be.

However, my business as a writer is not so much to pass judgment on how people speak, but to try to record their speech accurately for the sake of telling a story whose underlying values I hope are moral and positive. When I employ "bad language," as you call it, and references to sex, it's not because I think these are needed to sell books or to hold the reader's interest, but because sex and body functions and the names for them, both polite and impolite, are part of life and I am interested in portraying life as it really is.

If I fudge on details by creating an angry football player who says, "Oh, sugar," who will trust me later when I try to convey the important things that athletes think and feel? I could, of course, choose to write only about people who use "good language," but that would eliminate a lot of possibilities for characters.

I guess that what it comes down to is that even though I too dislike "bad language," that doesn't keep me from liking or even loving a lot of people who use it. I want them in my books too, even at the risk of offending a few readers.

I hope that you will continue your interest in reading and language. I hope that fewer people in the future will feel the need to use lazy, unimaginative language, so that it will fade away and I won't have to put it in my books. And I also hope that you will come to agree with me that what's more important in judging people in both real life and in literature is not the purity of the language but the goodness of their spirits.

My best wishes,

Robin Brancato

Realistically Speaking: How "Real" Is Realism in Adolescent Literature?

June H. Buhler and Betty O. Mason

Parents, librarians, educators, and even a Commissioner of Education have expressed grave concerns over the realism in adolescent literature written during the last fifteen years. The book themes of drugs, death, race, sex, and divorce are some of the topics that people believe will corrupt the morals and values of today's young readers. Many want the books censored or banned.

Are books dealing with realistic themes trying to change the values of youth and thus undermining society? A computer search of publications of the past three years revealed a list of articles concerning realism in adolescent literature. We randomly selected sixteen books from the list of all books mentioned in those articles. Using our own personal and professional judgments, we read and analyzed each book according to topic, characterization, resolution of crisis, readability, and sex of main character. Detailed analysis of our findings is shown in Figure A on the following page.

The analysis seems to indicate that the topics in these sixteen books are relevant but the resolution of the conflict is often too easy to be believed. In addition, the readability level is often too high for many readers who will be attracted to the topic.

CHILD ABUSE

Two of the books in the sample deal with child abuse. In Run, Shelley, Run the main character is the victim of sexual harassment by her stepfather, homosexual abuse by the inmates in the detention center, and emotional abuse by the authorities in the center. In reality Shelley is abused by a system in society that has no place for a child who is unloved at home. In The Lottery Rose Georgie is subjected to severe physical abuse by a boyfriend of his mother. Although the mother deplores the treatment of the child, she can see no way out because of their extreme poverty and her dependence on the boyfriend for money for food. Both books deal graphically with the physical and mental anguish suffered by abused children in our society.

DRUGS

Go Ask Alice is a gripping account written in diary form of a fifteen-year-old girl's experimentation with drugs and descent into the drug culture. Escape From Nowhere contains an excellent portrayal of drug traffic. In The Contender and That Was Then,

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FIGURE A

ANALYSIS OF REALISM COMPONENTS

KEY
1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Poor
* Language not Realistic

TITLE	Sex of Main Character	Age of Main Character	Readability	Characterization	Resolution of Problem	MAJOR AREA OF REALITY DEALT WITH IN BOOK												
						Child Abuse	Death	Divorce	Drugs	Family Life	Friendship	Ghetto Life	Guilt	Homosexuality	Interaction With Parents	Puberty	Race	Teen-Age Pregnancy Marriage
Anon - Go Ask Alice	G	15	7	1	4				1				1		1			
Blume - It's Not the End of the World	G	11	5	1	1			1		1					2			
Blume - Then Again, Maybe I Won't	B	13	4	1	2					2	1		1		2	1		
Bonham - Durango Street	B	15	7	1	2					2	2	1*			2		1	
Dizenzo - Phoebe	G	16	6	1	4					2	1		2		1			1
Donovan - I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip	B	15	7	3	3		2	1		2	3		1	3	3			
Eyerly - Escape From Nowhere	G	16	7	3	2				1	3	2		2		2			
Hall - Sticks and Stones	B	16	7	1	4			2		2	1			3				
Head - Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones	B&G	16	7	1	4		3			2	2		2		1			2
Hinton - That Was Then, This Is Now	B	15	7	2	2				1	2	1	3*	1		2			
Hinton - The Outsiders	B	15	7	2	2		2			2	2	3*						
Hunt - The Lottery Rose	B	9	10	2	1	1	2			1	1	1			1			
Hunt - William	B	8	7	2	2		2			2	1		2		1	2	4	3
Kerr - I'll Love You When You're More Like Me	B	16	9	2	3		3			2	2		2	2	2	2		
Lipsyte - The Contender	B	17	7	2	3				2	2	1	3*	2				4	
Samuels - Run, Shelley, Run	G	16	7	1	1	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1		

This Is Now friends are deep into drugs and the main characters are concerned with their responsibilities to their friends. In neither of these cases are the two main characters involved in drugs themselves. In Run, Shelley, Run Shelley is forced into drugs because of a betrayal of a trusted friend. All five books are realistic in the description of the drug experience: the trips, the euphoria, the depression, the psychoses. However, no mention is made of the expense or the crime that is related to the acquisition of drugs.

DEATH

Death is a theme in seven of the books. In Run, Shelley, Run a friend of Shelley's commits suicide rather than be returned to the detention center. Shelley's extreme reaction to this death, for which she felt partly responsible, causes her incarceration in solitary confinement for thirteen days, and almost causes a total break with reality. The grief mixed with guilt is painfully real. I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip starts with the death of Davy's grandmother and ends with the death of his dog. Strangely the grief for the grandmother, Davy's significant other, is minimal and consequently unrealistic. At the death of his dog, however, Davy's grief and guilt are typical of a teenage boy. The other books in this sample which deal with death are only adequately realistic.

DIVORCE

Judy Blume handles divorce extremely well in It's Not the End of the World. Karen goes through the stages of denial, embarrassment, blaming others, hating her parents, attempting to reconcile her parents, and finally accepting the divorce. The only area that most children experience that Karen did not was self-blame. In I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip Davy goes to live with his divorced mother and frequently visits his father who is remarried. The drunken mother's resentment of the father and his wife rings true notes of the trauma in divorce, and it naturally confuses Davy who is fonder of his stepmother than of his own mother.

Divorce is not a major theme in Sticks and Stones, but the divorce sets the stage for Tom's moving to the small town where his troubles began. His dislike of his mother's boyfriend makes it difficult to communicate with his mother and causes problems to accelerate.

GHETTO LIFE

The books on ghetto life are very descriptive of the poverty, fear, filth, need for protection, idleness of dropouts, bravado against the establishment, and general despair. While the gang wars are described in gory detail, the strongest language used in the books we examined is "fink" or "whitey" or "Uncle Tom." No one who has taught in a minority school or read graffiti can believe that the language used in these books is "real." The police and social workers bring to mind "Mr. Clean" or someone too dumb to catch on to the maneuvers of the kings of the street.

In *The Outsiders* and *That Was Then, This is Now*, the values shown were very middle class and seemed to be set in the poor section of town for the purpose of "with-it-ness."

SEXUALITY

The topic of homosexuality seems to be one of the most difficult to portray. The only graphic descriptions were in *Run, Shelley, Run* where the "Butches" ran the "Racket" while the house parents looked the other way. Shelley finally gave in to big Julia because she needed Julia's protection but was repulsed by her physical advances and sensations. In *Sticks and Stones*, however, Tom's life is made wretched by the gossip and prejudice resulting from his friendship with a homosexual writer. Even though no effort is made to involve Tom in physical expression of homosexual behavior, he doubts his own heterosexuality. In *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip* Davy has a brief homosexual encounter, although the book never makes clear what they did and only states, "they made out." Homosexuality was pictured as a problem in all the above selections. Only in *I'll Love You When You're More Like Me*, when a secondary character comes out of the closet, is being "gay" accepted. In the others the homosexual characters are depicted as being different or apart and unacceptable.

Puberty and sexual awareness are the central themes of *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*. Tony wants to wear a raincoat to school on a hot day to avoid embarrassment should he experience an erection. He discovers that a book is all he needs in an emergency. He receives a pair of binoculars which he uses to watch the girl next door undress. Tony's interests, fears, and sexual fantasies are typical of the developing male.

Characters in *I'll Love You When You're More Like Me* and *Run, Shelley, Run* become aware of sexual needs and yearn for attention from special people who don't love them in return.

In *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones* the problem of pre-marital sex ends in a high school marriage. *Phoebe* covers only the period of her discovery of the pregnancy and her mounting fear and shame. In *William* the girl is identified as an unwed mother in the beginning but her feelings are only mentioned twice--once when she keeps the child rather than put it up for adoption and the other when the child is referred to as a bastard. While the feelings of shame, fear, inadequacy for parenthood, and loss of innocence seem real enough in this area, the solutions are too pat.

RACE

The Contender pictures a black youth trying to find a place for himself. He trains as a fighter and finds real challenge in building his body and having to control the growing power of his skill. He sees his way out of the ghetto but turns down a future as a fighter because he lacks the killer instinct and wants to return to school and help other kids through recreation. Others try to get him to join the "down with whitey" movement but he resists.

In some reviews race is listed as a topic developed in *William*, but one has to read between the lines to determine that the three orphan children were black and the unwed mother who befriended them was white. Maybe the reality is that they were so "desensitized" it didn't make any difference. However, an adolescent would be hard pressed to get any understanding of racial problems from this book.

Durango Street is a chilling picture of gang warfare between blacks and Puerto Ricans. While race was not the predominant theme of this book, the cultural milieu of Rufus Henry, returning home from the Detention Center, is portrayed with honesty and understanding.

OTHER AREAS

Family life, friendship, guilt, and interaction with parents are major areas dealt with in the majority of these books. While family life is adequate, rarely excellent, friendship is a vital part of most of the stories. The need for friendship, and the conflict that arises when friends do not live up to expectations, are true to life in most of the literature. With the exception of *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip*, interractions with parents are realistic. Guilt is a strain running through all the books. A common characteristic of most teenagers, guilt is felt over betrayal of friends, sexual development, homosexuality, teenage pregnancy, death, and hate for adults. The portrait of these emotions seems true to the adolescent life experience.

EVALUATION

The readability levels given in Figure A were derived by hand using the Fry formula which yields an approximate grade level for material at 50-75% comprehension. Therefore for independent reading an individual would have to be able to read material at least two grade levels above the level listed in the chart.

Since adolescents tend to read books about protaganists their own age and sex, one begins to see the problems when a book about a nine year old is written at tenth grade level and can be read comfortably only by someone with twelfth grade or college level reading ability. The interest level and readability are not congruent--e.g. statistics on pre-teenage pregnancies and venerial disease make it obvious that many students are sexually active as early as nine or ten years of age. There seems to be a need for books of sexual awareness and problems written on a lower reading level than the ones we sampled. Other realistic topics may be appealing to more readers if the readability is on their independent reading level.

The characterization in the books is for the most part good; some are exceptionally well done. Most of the main characters are well rounded with both good and bad sides to their personalities. Two exceptions to this are Davy in *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip* and Carla in *Escape From Nowhere*. There is an over-abundance of alcoholic mothers, "do-gooder" social workers, dumb cops with big hearts, insensitive teachers, and hip brothers.

Problems are resolved realistically in a few of the books. For instance in *It's Not the End of the World* the incompatible parents do not get back together and live happily ever after. Georgie in *The Lottery Rose* loses a friend in the end but gains another one and finds a permanent home for his rose. In *Run, Shelley, Run*, Shelley finally gives up trying to run home and finds a home with a kind lady who cares for her.

Reality shimmers into fantasy in *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones*. Problems of the pregnancy are resolved by the baby being born at seven months and dying shortly after. Consequently Bo Jo gets to go on to college on his athletic scholarship as if nothing had ever happened. In *Sticks and Stones* the resolution is a convenient car accident on an icy road where the rumor-monger is killed. Tom, hurt in the accident, resolves his problems and greets his homosexual friend all in a space of about two pages.

The main character in *Go Ask Alice* seems to have solved her problems, and the last diary entry is very optimistic. Then a postscript notes that she died three weeks later and no one knows why. In other words, the problems in these books are more lifelike than the resolutions.

CONCLUSION

Part of the opposition to realism in adolescent literature has been fear that deviant behavior will become acceptable. Analysis of this sample of adolescent books does not indicate any real danger of that happening. To the contrary, the deviant suffer, the good triumph, the family is cherished, and friends are supported. Traditional values in sex are upheld; premarital sex, abortion, and homosexuality cause pain and suffering.

Yearning for love and for someone who really cares are the unifying strands throughout the books. The most frightening reality may be that drugs, sex, and violence are only symptoms of the "real" realism--*loneliness* and *alienation*.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Arm of the Starfish by Madeleine L'Engle.
Dell, 1980. 240 pp. $1.75.

I always wondered what James Bond was like when he was 16 years old. After reading *The Arm of the Starfish*, I now know. Adam Eddington is our hero, a resourceful (and amazingly savvy) biology student who, in only two chapters, becomes involved with A) the beautiful but untrustworthy Kali Cutter, a 16-year-old seductress, B)Poly O'Keefe, another beautiful peer, on the run from international baddies, and C) Dr. O'Keefe, a scientist whose formula for biological re-generation has the (under) world frothing at the mouth. Adam's spy adventure is played out in Lisbon, with the classic elements of an adult thriller added in--moonlight swims with beautiful girls, boobytrapped knives, sharks, disappearences, kidnappings, and forked tongues. The Arm of the Starfish is a lot of fun to read. It has a fast moving plot, with some violence, and of course is a thriller with little redeeming social value, the best kind. The book would be a treat for the good to high reader in grades 9 or 10. Why didn't these things happen to me when I was 16?

Reviewed by Joseph R. Calabro, Pomperaug High School, Southbury, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Garden of Broken Glass by Emily Cheney Neville.
Dell, 1979. 215 pp. $1.25.

Ms. Neville won the Newbery Medal for her earlier novel, It's Like This, Cat, and Garden of Broken Glass has been called "a masterpiece" by Catholic Library World. This reviewer, however, found it to fall far short of those standards. The story concerns itself with four mature seventh graders all of whom live in the same run down area of St. Louis. Three of the youngsters are black; the remaining member of the quartet, Brian Moody, is white. Seemingly, the author has taken as many adolescent problems as possible and divided them among the four. Dwayne suffers the pangs of first love as well as pangs of conscience for having committed a robbery. Martha fights the problem of obesity as well as the possibility of being pregnant. Getting out of the ghetto is Melvita's dream, and she becomes involved with an older man, a high school student. The primary focus of the novel is on Brian, whose alcoholic mother as well as his older sister and younger brother are always down on him for one reason or another. Garden of Broken Glass is a slice of life novel which seems to go nowhere. Ms. Neville does realistically portray the dialect of the inner city black, but this alone is not enough to create "a masterpiece."

Reviewed by Philip M. Connors, J.F. Kennedy Junior High School, Enfield, CT.

Fears, Fascinations, Obsessions: X-Rated The Theme of Power in YA Literature

Lou Willet Stanek

In the Sixties, the youth led a social revolt. In the Seventies, Watergate exposed us all. Consequently, Americans' fear and fascination with power and its affects has become an obsession. Literature's prime contribution to the history of civilization has been the recording of man's fears, fascinations, and obsessions, as well as his dreams; and the major theme of many current works of art explore the use and misuse of power over self, in the family, institutions, businesses, and social groups.

The 1977 book burning in Warsaw, Indiana[1], proves that pockets of people still want the exposure of fears, frustrations, and obsessions limited to those old enough to vote. In an age when newspaper headlines seem to alternate between bewailing our country's lack of adult leadership and our children's inability to read, it appears contrary to common sense to want to protect our young from literature not always reflecting the sunny side of life.

For decades, working to restore disturbed children, Bruno Bettelheim[2] has attempted to explain that a child's greatest need is to find meaning in his/her life. He contends children are cheated out of a potent means of understanding when the literature they are given does not provide access to a deeper meaning of what is important at that stage of development. The acquisition of skills, Bettelheim feels, including the ability to read becomes devalued when the story adds nothing of substance to the child's life.

Even though the discoveries of child psychology and psychoanalysis have revealed how violent, anxious, destructive, and even sadistic a child's imagination can be, nothing dies harder than the myth that society is the source of all human imperfections and anxieties. According to Bettelheim, there is a widespread disinclination to let children know that the source of much that goes wrong in life is due to our own natures, the propensity of all men to act aggressively, asocially, selfishly, out of anger and anxiety. Instead, he says, we want our children to believe all men are inherently good.

Bettelheim believes that children know better and so do I. A few years ago when adults were banning Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, kids were reading it behind the barn . . . *knowingly*. The monster which the young person knows best and is most concerned

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with is the monster he feels or fears himself to be. Raising a youngster only on goo and the power of positive thinking does nothing to equip him to get a grasp on his partially formed self, control the monster, or become a mature leader in a difficult world.

John Updike, a talented recorder of our fears, fascinations, obsessions, and dreams, says, "The world has changed, and in a sense we are all heirs to despair. Better to face this and tell the truth, however dismal . . ."[3] A few young adult authors, such as Robert Cormier and Virginia Hamilton, have. Too many others have pandered Mannon by turning out tinny, commercial "good reads"; made an issue the hot dog, the story the bun; or avoided the Warsaw, Indiana, book burners by writing TV inspired, situational comedies.

In this exploration of power and its affects as a major theme in young adult literature, I examined a number of teenage books, not only looking at the theme but also trying to determine if the authors have told the "truth, however dismal" as Updike suggested.

POWER IN THE FAMILY

In novels which focus on the power struggle in the family, I found the spotlight still on the father-child relationship. Norma Klein wrote *Mom, the Wolfman and Me* in 1972 but not much has changed in young adult fiction since 1976 when I found mother-daughter relationships an unexplored aspect of teenage life. This omission is regrettable and surprising in an age when the feminist movement gains momentum and adolescent authorities, such a Peter Blos, emphasize the early identification with the mother as a tension adolescents must rework and transcend if full adulthood is to ensue.[4]

Richard Peck's *Father Figure*, Susan Richard Shreve's *Children of Power*, Peggy Mann's *There Are Two Kinds of Terrible* all deal with an adolescent's struggle to understand and cope with their feelings for their fathers and would be good choices for a unit study, but it is my old favorite, *M. C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton that hits the mother lode.

M. C. Higgins, the Great is as rare in the young adult genre as a pearl in an oyster. The plot tingles with tensions and conflicts, multi-faced characters challenge the reader's intelligence, and the complex structure can be as murky and confusing as the odyssey through adolescence itself. Few teachers will have college notes to make presenting it easy, and it will take more than one reading and lots of planning, but as with Cormier's complicated books, to avoid either would be as foolish as stringing the oyster and eating the pearl.

M. C. Higgins, the Great opens with M. C. feeling momentarily powerful sitting on top of a forty foot flagpole planted in the yard of his home on Sarah's Mountain. He is dreaming of an escape for himself and his family from the strip mining spoil that threatens to slip down and engulf their house.

From his gleaming pole, he also sees two strangers who have entered the hills and are making their way towards Sarah's Mountain. One is "the dude" who M.C. thinks will make his Mama a singing star. The other is Lurhetta Outlaw, a young wanderer who teaches M.C., by example, that choice and action lie within his power.

M. C. Higgins, the Great is too honest to offer a particularly happy ending, but the boy finally comes to terms with his family, his heritage, and his own desires by wandering in and out of the past and present, reality and illusion. Along the way he wins and loses in love and his battle to control his own destiny.

Universally, fathers deal with the paradox of wanting their sons to grow strong and independent while feeling diminished when they do. Sons like M. C., perplexed by the Oedipal struggle, fight for the power fathers have, or sons think they have, and feel guilty about winning and angry about losing. In our culture, the tradition is for mother's love to be given and a father's to be won. Most adolescents will understand and identify with M.C. and his father Jones' scuffling that is as light as a breeze and as serious as war.

M. C. wins his father's love and respect by growing as tough as Jones wishes, but their games have taken on intense undertones. The boy not only has a subconscious wish to replace his father, but in reality feels he must also take his mother and the children away from the destructive spoil. And he, not Jones, has the power to climb the pole and see beyond Sarah's Mountain. Yet, he does not have autocracy because Jones can still pin him firmly to the soil on which he was born and will inherit.

As mothers often do, Banina plays the arbitrator and interpreter in the power struggle between her son and husband. Although the conflict is not resolved, M. C. gets hold of himself and in the end "they were still father and son in rhythm surrounded by the night."

POWER IN YOUTH GROUPS

While M. C. Higgins lived a relatively isolated life on a mountain, the majority of adolescents live in cities or towns and form cliques, gangs, or clubs for the same end. Blos says that the uniformism of teenagers rests on their need for coercive group standards to control inner drives they can't yet regulate alone.

S. E. Hinton, a seventeen year old child of the 60s, not only wrote a best seller, *The Outsiders*, describing from a teenager's viewpoint the need for cliques and gangs, but she also became a catalyst that revived a tired, formula-ridden genre creating what came to be labeled "The New Realism" in Y.A. literature.

Hinton's major theme, however, dealt with the conflict between the haves and the have-nots and laid the blame on society. Perhaps having not yet worked her way to maturity, she still feared the internal monster too much to write about it. It was not until 1974 that Cormier would attack "the myth that society is the source of all human imperfections and anxieties." Bettelheim had been right. The myth did die hard. Cormier's The Chocolate War was about losing. Good guys finished last because they weren't as powerful as the bad guys. The bad guys were powerful because they learned how to weild their baleful power from corrupt adults--adults in The Church. Educators enlisted their troops and got into the chocolate war.

Betsy Hearne, Children's Book Editor of Booklist, led the charge with her editorial, "Whammo, you lose"[5], edged in black and written in language hard and sharp as a knife blade. Hearne's main thesis, the characters were unbelievable, was understandable, if not realistic. Even though Ms. Hearne's hometown, Chicago, was dealing daily and not very well with powerful and destructive youth street gangs such as The Blackstone Rangers, she and multitudes of other intelligent adults did not want to admit that the young could be violent, anxious, destructive, and sadistic like Cormier's immortal Archie, son of Iago, Raskolnikov, Heathcliff.

While adults discoursed, the Jerrys who are never a match for the real Archies were once again reading behind the barn or in the pool hall or were writing to Cormier telling him about the Archie in their school or . . . confessing.

The Chocolate War followed Watergate, and adolescent lives as well as the lives of their elders had been touched by the national disillusionment. If none of the books written for the young at that time had dealt with the fears of corrupt leadership, the omission would have conveyed another coverup. Adolescents are always trying to learn to cope independently. Protecting them from what they must learn to master, especially in themselves, does not aid their maturation.

In 1978, Lois Duncan looked at the effect of corrupt power within a youth group in her novel, Killing Mr. Griffin. As in The Chocolate War, the setting is in a school, but the adults do not provide the model for corruption. Duncan demonstrates how power can manipulate and corrupt even "the good kids" just as leadership can raise them to their highest level of personal motive and social morality.

The bad seed in this story is Mark--the strange looking boy with a face like a fox and cool, appraising, gray-marble eyes--who had the power to make his friends do crazy things.

> Mark isn't like other people. There was a strength in Mark, an ability to know exactly what to do in any emergency and when Mark said something you had to believe it, because if you couldn't believe in Mark you couldn't believe in anything.

By the time Betsy, the cute, popular cheerleader; Susan, the bright, outsider; David, the student body president; and Jeff, the athlete, came to realize Mark was a psycopath, they had been responsible for the death of their English teacher and had brought chaos, havoc, and suffering to their lives and to many others.

None of them, except Mark, wanted to hurt Mr. Griffin, but all wanted to be accepted by the group, and each individual wanted something he or she didn't have. Mark recognized their needs, understood their weaknesses, and used his insights to manipulate them. The story is believable, especially if one has accepted M. C. Higgins' struggle to become independent of his family as a universal symbol of adolescent conflict. Enlightened parents and educators know peers have a much stronger impact on adolescents than families do. Trying to be independent of their families, but afraid of failure, adolescents are drawn together like magnets.

Duncan is not disinclined to let kids know that much that goes wrong in life is due to our own natures and that all men are not inherently good. When the novel ends, three students are charged with second-degree murder and the third has the option of turning state's evidence or being tried for manslaughter.

Susan Richard Shreve's Children of Power, published as an adult novel, could just as logically have been a Y.A.; in either case her characters, young and old, are not all inherently good. The flap copy, geared for mass market, says the main character is Samuel Taylor, Chairman of the FCC, husband and father, and one of the few spokesmen against the public McCarthy and the Cold War. Reviewers tend to see it as his daughter Natty's story. Therein lies the problem with the novel that has more potential than delivery.

Shreve's approach to the struggle for power and its affects is to use a shotgun when a rifle would have hit her target. The story takes place during a week in December 1954 after the Senate's censuring of Joe McCarthy when America was reeling from the acrimonious result. The plot deals with Natty and her father's struggle with her independence, Sam's battle with the residue of his own unresolved feelings about his father, and the corrupt power of a group of Natty's schoolmates calling themselves the Syndicate. The purpose of this group of "government brats" was to break Natty's tenacious loyalty to her football player boyfriend Filip, to her father, and ultimately to personally and professionally ruin Sam Taylor as other decent men all around them were being destroyed by the hysteria that McCarthy generated. Any of the three problems merited a novel on its own. Combining them weakened the lot.

In spite of its flaws, Children of Power deserves to be included in a study of adolescent's power struggles. M. C.'s unsophisticated father's understanding of the father-son conflict came from tradition and feelings; Sam Taylor had the advantage of education and cosmopolitan experience. But this made it no easier for him to let go of the child born late in his life who seemed like a miracle.

In her attempt to pull away from the "weight" of her father's love, Natty was attracted to a group who were fun-loving, irreverent, risk takers and represented the spirit of the times. She wanted to be "untouchable, apart; yet desiring their recognition to affirm that sense of self still liquid at seventeen."

Natty's vulnerability was her awareness of her dependency on her father; his was his propensity for collecting the wounded, frail birds such as the defeated Joe McCarthy. At the height of McCarthy's

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power, Sam Taylor had been one of his strongest adversaries, but in his decline it is the Taylor's house where McCarthy spends his fitful alcoholic nights. The Syndicate, capable of doing brutal harm, casually, selfishly--as were McCarthy and his parents--played on Natty's and Sam's vulnerability.

Natty becomes a willing and somewhat innocent victim of the Syndicate's plot. As Sam had always feared, he woke up one morning and she was gone. By the time the plot is unraveled, one of the youngsters is dead, all are wounded, and Sam Taylor has taken a painful journey back into his past to deal with his feelings of having failed his own father. In one of the final scenes, father and daughter reunited are still grappling with finding the proper positions in each other's lives.

POWER IN INSTITUTIONS

Some fathers become so absorbed in their own power struggles that their concern for their heirs' health and maturation can be swamped. Perhaps the most publicized event in recent history was when a former President allowed his daughter to go around the country defending him on false premises while he was so caught up in saving his own power and position, he didn't tell even her the truth.

In interviews, Robert Cormier denies being consciously influenced by Watergate, or any specific events, when he wrote his three Y.A. books examining the affects of corrupt leadership and the misuse of power. Yet, The Chocolate War, I Am the Cheese, and After the First Death focus on young victims of these concepts. Corrupt government, however, did not originate with Watergate, and Cormier seems to find his touchstone with Hamlet, the young Prince who was a victim of the rottenness in the State of Denmark, more than with current players.

Whether Cormier's metaphor is classic or contemporary, even those reviewers who admire his writing skills object to his gloomy picture of humanity, his pessimism, because he is writing for young adults. I would answer their concerns with a quote from La Rochefoucauld who said, "We all have sufficient strength to endure the misfortune of others."[6] I would only add that "WE" includes adolescents. The majority of those adolescents I have known have strong stomachs, and they will not be harmed by truth and its terrible beauty.

I Am the Cheese has a complex plot written on three levels consisting of three story strands braided tightly together. Fourteen-year-old Adam Farmer tells the gripping tale of government corruption, espionage, and counterespionage.

On one level Adam is fleeing by bicycle from his home in Massachusetts to find his father in Rutterburg, Vermont, having the kind of adventures anybody could experience. But Adam's story is interspersed with terse questions and answers between him and Brint, a psychiatrist, which slowly reach the second level, a situation with which no child should have to cope.

Adam's newspaper-reporter father had given testimony at the trial of the members of a criminal organization that had infiltrated the government itself. For their physical safety, his family had come under the protection of the super-secret Department of Re-Identification. When he is an adolescent, Adam learns what has happened to them--how their names, his father's occupation, and the family's place of residence had been carefully changed. Soon after his discovery, the family must run again. But this time, both parents are killed and Adam is taken prisoner by a horrifying, ruthless, government agency--the third level of the suspenseful tale.

All credible Y.A. books must have an element of the search for identity. The ruts run deep down that well-travelled path where all adolescents must walk, but Cormier shows what happens when, in addition to wise guys, his own frailties, and the normal teenage enemies, a kid must wrestle with an ominous, treacherous, corrupt government force. The humor is grim when Adam Farmer finally discovers he is not the farmer in the dell but the cheese who stands alone--the bait around which the rats gather.

Although Y.A. reviewers might still find Cormier's books strong medicine, he attracts attention from the book world at large which most adolescent authors only dream about at contract time. *Newsweek* recently reviewed *After the First Death* and interviewed the author. They said:

> It is Cormier's hard-hitting unsentimentality that most sets him apart from other writers in his field, and some critics complain that he goes too far . . . But Cormier makes no apologies. "As long as what I write is true and believable, why should I have to create a happy ending? My books are an antidote to the TV view of life, where even in a suspenseful show you know before the last commercial that Starsky and Hutch will get their man. That's phoney realism. Life just isn't like that."[7]

After the First Death doesn't have a happy ending nor should it have. The story opens with young Ben Marchand's soliloquy debating with himself and the reader if he should commit suicide before or after the long overdue visit of his father, Brigadier General Marcus Marchand. The General is the unquestioning patriot and commander of Inner Delta, an operation devoted to "psychological stuff, behavior intervention," buried so deep and secretively into Fort Delta only a select few Americans and their enemies know it exists. Hoping, fearing, and not believing his father can save him from what he sees as his disgrace to himself, his father, and his country, Ben, with great bravado, gains time by satirizing Prince Hamlet's procrastinating "to be or not to be" speech.

While Ben waits, the story flashes back to two other youthful, tragic stories. Miro is the young terrorist involved in hijacking a busload of children and making his rite of passage to adulthood under the tutelage of another zealous patriot opposing America and Ben's father. By accident, Kate, a pretty teenage girl, is driving the bus Miro hijacks and Ben tries to save.

Kate dies bravely, lamenting the fact that home and school had not challenged her to know who she was and what she could do if necessary. Ben kills himself, never knowing he has been set up by his "my country right or wrong" father and a system that doesn't question the price of that patriotism. Miro escapes, but he has been brainwashed into denying personal feelings and dreams. Just as *The Chocolate War*, this novel is about losing, but it examines honestly why we lose. Cormier has recorded it all--our fears, fascinations, obsessions, and dreams. He demonstrates how "the world has changed, and in a sense we are all heirs to despair." He has faced it and told the "truth, however dismal . . . ."

FOOTNOTES

1. Stephen Arons, "Book Burning in the Heartland," *Saturday Review*, July 21, 1979, pp. 24-29.
2. Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment, The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1977.
3. Stephen Singular, "The Sound and Fury Over Fiction," *New York Times Magazine*, July 7, 1979, p. 13.
4. Lou Willett Stanek, "Growing Up Female: The Literary Gaps," *Media & Methods*, September 1976, pp. 46-48.
5. Betsy Hearne, "Whammo, you lose," *Booklist*, July 1, 1974, p. 1.
6. Lloyd Alexander, "No Laughter in Heaven," *Horn Book Magazine*, February 1970, p. 14.
7. Tony Schwartz, "Teen-age Laureate," *Newsweek*, July 16, 1979, pp. 87-92.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

In Nueva York by Nicholasa Mohr.
Dell, 1979. 155 pp. $1.50.

This collection of eight short stories presents glimpses of the lives of a few residents of a New York City Puerto Rican neighborhood. Some characters appear in several of the stories, giving the collection a sense of unity. The topics of the stories range from a reunion between mother and son after forty years apart, the trials of a shopkeeper, and fears for a wandering child, to the marriage of convenience between a homosexual and a lesbian. Throughout the stories runs a thread of people caring for each other, a true neighborliness. Because these stories contain both straightforward reports of daily events and subtle revelations of characters, they can be read on several levels. No great life-question is core to any story, and no final, unalterable solution is offered. Together the stories impress by their portayal of neighbors in a striving, almost accidentally ethnic neighborhood, where people's concerns are those of any people in similar circumstances. In her attempt to avoid the literary barrio stereotype, Mohr has sacrificed the special flavor of strong dialect which enriched her earlier novel, Nilda. Though competently done, In Nueva York is without any particular ethnic flair, which may or may not be the author's intent.

Reviewed by Chris Sullivan, Plainville High School, Plainville, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

White Mama by Robert C.S. Downs.
Ballantine, 1980. 154 pp. $1.95.

Estelle Malone is snidely dubbed "White Mama" by the sixteen year old black delinquent she takes into her home for the $100 she's paid to board the boy by city authorities in an attempt to rehabilitate him. But she reevaluates the trade-offs when the constant conflicts between her and B.T. escalate and eventually climax in his literally stealing her every worldly possession. B.T.'s action renders Mrs. Malone a "brown bag woman," one of the dispossessed, perpetually itinerant, aimless wanderers of the big city, whose only home is the subway--people whom she had previously observed with bewildered, frightened curiosity. Before the novel ends on a positive note with the reestablishment of an odd yet heartwarming relationship between the two main characters, the reader is offered a series of certainly educational, albeit sordid and shocking, vignettes of life on the seemier side of the big city. White Mama is a well written book; the plot is fast moving, action-packed, and absorbing (especially for an ex-urbanite). The wealth of topics for discussion for adolescent readers of various reading and maturity levels that can be gleaned from the always fascinating, sometimes heated debates between "White Mama" and her star boarder assures the book's popularity and success in the high school classroom.

Reviewed by Ann Norton, Bristol Central High School,
Bristol, CT.

Confessions of an Adolescent Novel Addict

Sharron Freeman

I have a confession to make. I've been an Adolescent Novel addict for the past nine years. I've had to sneak and lie my way through adult life--so I've decided that it's time for me to come clean.

Nine years ago I was teaching Reading/Language Arts to learning disabled adolescents in a private school in the suburbs of Philadelphia. I was very new to teaching, so I was certain that I alone would (and could) find the cure for my students' reading problems. I used to come home each afternoon and complain to anyone who would listen that there must be some way to turn on my students to something other than drugs. Since I was a voracious reader, I was convinced that I could help my students fall in love with books, too. When I was a child, my parents took me to the library each week, something my mother claims helped to brand me for life with the love for reading. I thought that if I could translate my childhood passion for books and libraries to my students all would be well.

I decided to talk with the children's librarian at my branch library--and she turned out to be the spark that ignited me, and in turn, my students. She must have sensed that I was a very easy convert, because she stuffed ten books into my arms and told me to come back for more as soon as I finished my first installment. I read *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* by Judy Blume, since it was not only the first book on the pile but the one with the most intriguing title. I was absolutely hooked. I rushed through the next nine books, stopping only to tell my husband to forget about dinner. I continued reading until late that night--and I haven't stopped since.

When I rolled into school the next day, I was both exhausted and exhilarated. I couldn't wait to tell my students about my discoveries.

They weren't very interested, to say the least. Not one of them had read a book from cover to cover since the first or second grade. They all complained that they hated reading and that books were too hard for them to understand. They equated reading with failure. They were also under the impression that *real* reading was workbooks, dittos, and answer sheets.

About this time I found the book *Reading Is Only The Tiger's Tail* by Robert and Marlene McCracken.[1] In it was the wonderful idea of Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), which I quickly adapted and adopted. I was given some money by my principal to buy

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paperbacks, so I searched out high interest/low level books to order and scoured the bookstores for Young Adult paperbacks to buy right away. I read everything that I bought, making lists of the books which would go over with my students and discarding the books which I knew would fail.

I bought a timer to use for the first few weeks of SSR, made up some checksheets to be filled out each time a book was completed, and hung an old window shade on my door, writing each student's name on it, to be filled in later with finished titles. While I waited for the rest of my books to come in, I decided to pass the time by reading aloud to my students. They never once complained that they were too old to be read to--they just demanded a chapter or two before the bell rang each day. I read *Bad Fall* by Charles Crawford, *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, *Call Of The Wild* by Jack London, *Tales Of A Fourth Grade Nothing* by Judy Blume, *Where The Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls, and *The Eighteenth Emergency* by Betsy Byars. I realize that many of these books are considered "children's books," but I had to read books that were good read-aloud books--and the majority of YA novels are better read silently.

I warned my students that they wouldn't be able to keep their hands off the books once I brought them all in. They just snickered and made choice comments about my mother. When the time came, I dragged in a huge cardboard box, my timer, and my sales pitch and went to work converting a roomful of skeptics. I booktalked each book, stood it up in front of me, and told everyone to mentally choose one for their own. I told them that at the end of my spiel they could ask me for the book they thought they'd like and I'd let them touch it for five minutes. They continued on with their nasty comments while I laughed inside to see the excitement generated in my room. Everyone wanted to hold a particular book. I had tried to buy books that I knew would appeal to each of my students, from love stories to animal stories. I even had the common sense to buy double and triple copies of those books I knew would be immediate hits with my so-called "nonreaders."

At the end of my monologue there was a mad rush for the books. Within minutes, everyone was off in a corner with a book--and I was shrieking above the din for everyone to listen to the next phase of the operation. I told them that I would call out each name and that each person would call out his/her title, while I madly copied it down on a 5x8 card. As I collected their books to use for my next class, I said that they would be able to read their books for a limited time only during class the next day. I repeated this procedure with my other classes--and the tension that hung in the doorway was electric. No one wanted to be without a book. I had never seen such enthusiasm leak out of my students.

The next day I took out my 5x8 cards with the titles and names of my students on them, and, as I called off the titles, the students located their books from the shelves. I set the timer for three minutes and told the class that everyone would be able to read until the timer went off. I read, too. When the timer went off, so did the collective tempers of the class. They all wanted to keep reading (they should only have heard themselves!)--but I assured them that they'd have a chance to continue the next day, as I calmly took down the page numbers in pencil on my handy cards and collected the books. We went on to the day's work, with everyone grumbling and grouching about what a pain I was for keeping them from their books.

I can promise you I'm not exaggerating. My students actually turned into readers over the next few months. They increased their silent reading time from three minutes to forty-five minute stretches. I learned how to plug kids into appropriate books and how to steer them away from books which would frustrate and possibly turn them off to their new-found reading prowess. I noticed that if the non-readers tried the easier books for a while (Scholastic's Sprint and Action series were godsends) they could begin tackling the "harder" books as the months passed. My students seemed to become more self-confident and comfortable around the written word after a few months of SSR. Their parents came in to tell me tales of their child reading in the bathroom with the door locked instead of going to sleep; reading instead of wandering around the house complaining there was nothing to do; reading instead of watching TV; going to the library or bookstore to get a book to read over the week-end. They wanted to know what magic I'd woven to turn their kids into bookworms.

I have to accept some of the credit for the magic. I passed onto my students my total and neverending love for books. I also taught them how to approach a book and feel comfortable around it. I read some of the books aloud to them in order to take away some of the mystery surrounding words, sentences, and paragraphs. I dealt with reading skills in order to strengthen their word attack and comprehension skills. I encouraged them to talk and write about their books in order to make the stories come alive for both themselves and their peers. We played games with the books to break down barriers even further. We designed book covers and wrote our own stories to prove that writing books was just as enjoyable and difficult as reading them.

The truth is, the real magicians were (and are) the books and their authors. Judy Blume may be a controversial author to many, but she was our idol. Her books brought adolescence to life for us and allowed my students to relive some of their earlier traumas without giving themselves away. They could lose themselves in her characters and not have to admit to anyone but themselves that they, too, experienced adolescence as she described it. After a while, the girls were sneaking out Then Again, Maybe I Won't while the boys whispered over Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret.

Later on, in the next school I worked in, the favorites multiplied. My students demanded new titles as frequently as possible--so I continued to search through bookstores for new titles by their favorite authors. Go Ask Alice (Anonymous), Danziger's The Cat Ate My Gymsuit, Mathis' Teacup Full of Roses, Meriwether's Daddy Was A Number Runner, Klein's Sunshine and Mom, The Wolfman and Me, Kerr's Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack and Is That You, Miss Blue?, Bach's They'll Never Make a Movie Starring Me, Zindel's The Pigman and My Darling, My Hamburger, Donovan's I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth The Trip, Greene's Summer Of My German Soldier, Hunter's The Soul Brothers And Sister Lou, Neufeld's Freddy's Book, Childress' A Hero Ain't Nothin' But A Sandwich and Miles' The Real Me are some of the titles that everyone clammored for.

I realized that in order to keep up with the demand for new and better titles, I'd have to start reading reviews and articles of YA books. I searched out issues of School Library Journal and The Horn Book in order to fill myself in on what was recommended for adolescents by the media. I tried to buy all of the books in paperback (with a little help from Daniel Fader's Hooked On Books, which I'd read years earlier in graduate school) because my students seemed to be less intimidated by them. I put library pockets in each book and (with the help of my students) wrote out cards for each book. If a student wanted to take a book home, he or she signed it out and filed its card under the correct letter in my metal file. There was a penalty of immediate cash replacement of the book in case of loss or carelessness. I enforced this policy and got back almost all of my books by the end of each term. The students also had the option of giving me (in cash) the list price of the book to hold for them, returnable with the safe return of the borrowed book. Some preferred this--it helped them to feel better about losing or misplacing my books. I sent letters home to parents, telling them of my policy, and no one disagreed with my methods of maintaining a stocked paperback library.

I haven't taught adolescents in three and a half years, but I have continued to read and absorb YA novels. I take home as many new titles as I can each week from the area libraries, buying the best ones in paperback to add to my collection. I've turned to reviewing as a hobby and much rewarding diversion, and to teaching teachers about children's and adolescent literature at a neighboring college. I write to authors, sometimes, when I feel especially moved by their writing--and I've always encouraged my students to write to them, too, to show them that they are still read and appreciated.

Recently, my sister decided that she and I were children's and adolescent book groupies, since we seem to prefer to talk about and squeal with delight over our copies of kids' books instead of acting our ages and reading (and quietly discussing) adult fiction. I suppose the reality of it is I'm still hopelessly addicted and loving every last minute of it.

FOOTNOTE

1. Robert A. and Marlene J. McCracken, Reading Is Only The Tiger's Tail, San Rafael, CA: Leswing Press, 1972.

Instead of "Either/Or," Why Not "Both/And"?

Geraldine E. LaRocque

A common phrasing for questions about how to teach literature has been, "Should we teach this book *or* that? Should we use this methodology *or* that? Is one *genre* more suitable than another?" It is my thesis that, more often than not, we should avoid "either/or" thinking in the teaching of English and instead should espouse a "both/and" approach.

A good example of the "either/or" dichotomy in planning literature curricula at all grade levels is the reiterated question of the place of extensive *vs.* intensive reading of literature. Should the second grader read extensively in individually chosen trade books, *or* should she or he read carefully and thoroughly in basal readers? Should ninth graders read widely in the field of adolescent literature, or should they study carefully *A Tale of Two Cities*? Should non-English majors in college study closely, intently, and intensively two plays by Shakespeare; or should they read quickly and see, or only see, on TV or at the theater a number of the Bard's dramas with attention devoted mainly to characterization and ideas which are applicable to today's world? Is core learning a matter of reading certain books, or is it being familiar with the world's recurring problems, fears, ideas, etc.? My answer to all these questions would be, "Why can't students do *both* of the suggested activities?"

"No time," you say; "priorities must be set."

I counter with, "Priorities can be set in terms of the purposes to be served by the assignment, in terms of the class time devoted to the lesson, and in terms of the length of the assignment." Read on.

First of all, let me make clear why I believe we must follow a "both/and" policy. A recent research study conducted by Alvin Eurich[1] and reported in the *New York Times* found that "apprehensions about the decline in reading skills may be fully justified."[2] As a research assistant in educational psychology in 1928, Eurich prepared and administered two standardized reading tests to incoming freshmen at the University of Minnesota and also to a group of Minneapolis and St. Paul public high school seniors; fifty years later, with the permission of the University of Minnesota, he administered the same test to the 1978 freshmen. "'The conditions,' he said in an interview, 'were especially favorable for a comparison.'"[3]

Professor of English and Director of Teacher Education at the University of Northern Iowa, Dr. LaRocque wrote this article while she was a Visiting Senior Associate in the Program on Educational Policy and Organization, National Institute of Education, Intergovernmental Personnel Assignment. The views are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.

The college freshmen in 1978 failed to equal the performance of either the 1928 college freshmen or the high school seniors on the vocabulary, reading comprehension, and speed of reading sections of the tests:

Vocabulary Scores (Number Answered Correctly) Below 26
1978--College Freshmen--50%
1928--College Freshmen--40%

Reading Comprehension Scores (Number Answered Correctly) Below 12
1978--College Freshmen-----50%
1928--High School Seniors--40%
1928--College Freshmen-----30%

Speed of Reading Scores (Number Answered Correctly) Below 20
1978--College Freshmen--81%
1928--College Freshmen--54%

Although Dr. Eurich acknowledges that the 1928 and 1978 students are not comparable in some respects (e.g., many low achievers had dropped out of school in 1928), he cites the "noticeable decline by 1978 in the performance of the most gifted students--the top one percent"[4] as reason to be concerned about the school's and society's responsibility for the lowered achievement demonstrated by these tests. "'In 1978,' he said, 'no student scored higher than 75, a drop of some 20 points from the highest score in 1928; and only one student out of 100 in 1978 scored near 60, a score obtained by five out of 100 in 1928.'"[5]

Both Eurich and Harvard Professor Jeanne Chall speculate that the tendency of textbook publishers to adjust reading levels downward adds to students' decling abilities; Eurich wonders if we are becoming "headline" learners, paying "less and less attention to substance and the beauty of language."[6]

By adopting a "both/and" policy, perhaps the schools can reverse or at least halt some of the trends which Eurich's study highlights. In high school English classes, the first step in implementing the "both/and" solution to the teaching of literature would be to have students read widely in books, both fiction and non-fiction, at their present level of reading development. For some students, this will mean individual, extensive reading in adolescent literature; for others, it may mean reading many popular books and, perhaps, some serious modern literature; for still others, wide reading of the classics might be the norm. The reading time for this broad exploration can be provided by some regularized classroom system such as Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading which provides specified time periods for reading, thus putting into practice what we know about the importance of time-on-task for enhancing learning.

Activities like the one suggested above deal with two of the priorities mentioned earlier. First of all, we have set the purposes for reading as individual, extensive, and at the student's level of ability. Frequently one of the by-products of such reading would be speed; however, some teachers might want to tackle speed directly, using other methods. Second, we have determined the length of this assignment as a designated time period every day for the whole year. In addition to the actual uninterrupted reading of complete works, times will have to be scheduled for students to share what they have read with the teacher and with other students as well as times for teacher guidance.

Now, let us turn our attention to intensive reading lessons, perhaps more properly called exercises, that might occur once a week for half an hour over the course of the year, the purpose being to read a short piece for symbolic meaning, for inferences, for beauty, for semantic implications, or for any one of a number of other reading skills.

Although for this purpose we will take short passages from longer works, these lessons will not be either of the two kinds that once were popular--diagramming speeches from a classic like Julius Ceasar or pretending to have read or understood a work after having completed only snippets of it. For the purpose of making students more sophisticated, discerning readers, teachers should select short passages that can be read and discussed in the half-hour period per week set aside for in-depth, intensive reading. The length of time must be short so as to hold the students who are having difficulty, but the activity must be weekly. As the psychology of learning reminds us, many short lessons are often more effective than one, massive instructional experience.

Although there are many choices, in one such lesson the teacher might want students to look at how protagonists in novels are characterized. Often the reader can tell a good deal about a character by his thoughts or speeches. Look at this first-person revelation from the beginning of Sheila Schwartz's Like Mother, Like Me.

> All the years of my growing up I listened to my parents argue. The thing they fought about most was money. My mother would moan that their university degrees were only certificates that gave them the right to starve for the rest of their lives. Daily she would regret, and loudly, the fact that she had married another teacher.
>
> Of course, you had only to look at my father to see why my mother had married him. My father could compete for the title of Handsomest Man in the World. A tall, ruddy, blue-eyed, tawny-haired Viking astride a ship bound for the New World; proud, fearless, straight, and super cool. That describes my father. In fact, he was so gorgeous that it took people a long time to figure out that he wasn't very bright. As soon as he would walk into a room, men would stand taller and women would swoon. Everybody was taken in by that impressive exterior.
>
> ...
>
> But he was loved. My father was loved so much that the English department voted unanimously to give him tenure even without his doctorate. They once loved him enough to give

> him the chairmanship of the department, but he loused everything up and they quietly took it away again. By the time of his defection, all they would let him teach was Freshman Composition--a real disgrace, according to my mother. But my father didn't care. He didn't care about a lot of things that seemed to matter to most people.
>
> His students also loved him. They were always swarming about him--in his office, at the house, or telephoning him on one pretext or another. My mother's attitude toward students was very different. She regarded her home as a sanctuary from the students. I think she also felt that it would somehow not be appropriate for young men to drape themselves about her the way my father's women students did about him. "I should show them the picture in the attic, Dorian Grey," my mother used to snarl at him. He'd laugh, mildly.
>
> His students loved him for the same reasons I loved him. (Notice how I put that in the past tense. I still like him, moderately, but that is as strong as I would care to put it.) My father's students loved him because he was never in a hurry. He'd sit and share a pitcher of beer with them at our local pub and make them feel as good as if they were students at Harvard. He'd make them feel special. He was nice, kind, a good listener, and so pleasing to look at. He didn't have a mean bone in his body and was probably the easiest grader at the college.
>
> Even before his defection, I had gradually come to realize that my father was a fine fellow to split a pitcher of beer with, but not someone you could depend on for anything.*

A half-hour lesson on the above passage might begin with several students who had prepared in advance (maybe poor readers to whom you gave assistance, setting them up for success) reading the passage aloud as others follow the text; then the discussion might begin by considering what kind of person the speaker is.

Possible teacher questions: Are there any words you don't understand? (You might have students infer meaning from context, tell them yourself what the words mean, or have other students define the words so that the questioners won't be discouraged from asking by being afraid they might be given a research task.) When do you think this book was written? Why? Do you think a boy or a girl is speaking? What makes you think so? How old is the speaker? Are there any clues? What kind of personality does the speaker seem to have--serious, lovable, bright? What makes you think so? Do you think the author wants you to like, admire, dislike, or feel some other way about the speaker? What do you think the father's "defection" might be? Who is Dorian Grey--has anyone seen the movie, read the book? What does the reference here mean? (If no one knows about Dorian Grey, perhaps the teacher can tell the story or ask a student to check on it, giving the student the names of the reference works to use.) What kind of family life does the speaker seem to have? Although the speaker is primarily describing her father, what is her mother like? How do you know? Do you think the passage was written by a man or a woman? Why? (If this type of question appears sexist to you, skip it!) Students might be asked to hypothesize about what happens in the novel, where it takes place, etc., always trying to support their answers. Other questions are, no doubt, occurring to you as you read.

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* Sheila Schwartz, Like Mother, Like Me, New York: Pantheon, 1978, pp. 1-4. Reprinted with permission of the author and Pantheon Books, a Division of Random House, Inc.

In subsequent half-hour lessons the teacher might gradually increase the difficulty of passages of first-person exposition. The initial passage of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn serves as an example:

> You don't know about me, without you have read a book by the name of "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied, one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly, or the widow, or maybe Mary. Aunt Polly--Tom's Aunt Polly, she is--and Mary and the Widow Douglas, is all told about in that book--which is mostly a true book; with some stretchers, as I said before....
>
> The widow she cried over me, and called me a poor lost lamb, and she called me a lot of other names, too, but she never meant no harm by it. She put me in them new clothes again, and I couldn't do nothing but sweat and sweat, and feel all cramped up. Well, then, the old thing commenced again. The widow rung a bell for supper, and you had to come to time. When you got to the table you couldn't go right to eating, but you had to wait for the widow to tuck down her head and grumble a little over the victuals, though there warn't really anything the matter with them. That is, nothing only everything was cooked by itself. In a barrel of odds and ends it is different; things get mixed up, and the juice kind of swaps around, and the things go better.
>
> After supper she got out her book and learned me about Moses and the Bulrushers; and I was in a sweat to find out all about him; but by-and-by she let it out that Moses had been dead a considerable long time; so then I didn't care no more about him; because I don't take stock in dead people.*

A few questions, which capitalize on and extend the Like Mother, Like Me discussion, follow: Are there words you don't understand? Is a boy or a girl speaking? What makes you think so? What kind of education has the speaker had? How do you know? What kind of person is the speaker? What are the clues? What do you think "grumbling over the victuals" is? How can you tell? What does it tell us about the speaker? Who is Moses? What are the Bulrushers? What does his attitude about Moses tell you about the speaker? (If students don't know the story of Moses and the bulrushes, this is the time to read the Bible story to them.) What kind of person is the widow? What makes you think so?

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*Samuel Longhorne Clemens, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Norton Critical Edition, Edited by S. Bradley, R. C. Beatty, and E. H. Long, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961, p.7. Reprinted with permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

In-common careful reading of Jeannette Eyerly's adolescent novel See Dave Run in which the reader gets the full picture of the hero by piecing together a number of reports about him might be followed up with close reading of a passage where an author takes it upon himself to characterize the protagonists through actions, as Dickens does Carton in the chapter ironically titled "The Fellow of No Delicacy" in A Tale of Two Cities or as Hawthorne does Pearl in The Scarlet Letter. Advantages and disadvantages of various methods of characterization can be discussed with reference to concrete passages and with consideration of the different resulting tones of the various styles. Perhaps the biggest problem in these brief, intensive reading lessons is the choice of the material itself; it cannot jump too rapidly from the transparent to the esoteric; the above examples would profit by the addition of an intermediate passage from a popular adult novel, poem, or play, thereby bridging the gap between literature for young adults and the classics.[8]

It is important to note here that although the previous discussion has dealt only with fiction, the reading of non-fiction cannot be neglected. A logical progression for non-fiction might be from a TV news story to one on the same subject in a newspaper written especially for teenagers or one in the local paper, then to a popular magazine, and finally to an article of the kind one might find in The New York Times or Atlantic Monthly. To improve gifted students' levels of reading, much attention will need to be devoted to the latter type of more difficult material.

Naturally, there will be classes and individuals who, because of their ability and experience, will be able to start at a higher level in these weekly lessons and others who may not be capable of handling the really complicated selections; however, in-class or in-group reading and discussion of these kinds of passages, and, later, complete essays, may improve students' skills to the point where they may be capable of handling independently whole books of more difficult material than they have previously been accustomed to and, consequently, more able to read with understanding the materials with which students in 1928 apparently had fewer problems. Above all, improved reading ability may be the road to widened horizons and deeper satisfactions.

At the same time that there is little point in bemoaning the ostensible decline in reading skills or in longing for the good old days, there is also absolutely no justification for rejecting opportunities to begin school-wide policies designed to overcome students' reading deficiencies; and it seems as though one beginning might be to drop "either/or" from our teaching vocabularies and adopt "both/and."

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FOOTNOTES

1. Now, President of the Academy for Educational Development; formerly, acting President of Stanford University, a U. S. Navy commander in charge of a testing program, chancellor of the State University of New York, and head of the education division of the Ford Foundation.

2. Fred Hechinger, "About Education: 1978 Freshmen Score Poorly on 1928 Exam," New York Times, March 18, 1980, p. C.1.

3. *Ibid*., p. C.4.

4. *Ibid*., p. C.4.

5. *Ibid*., p. C.4.

6. *Ibid*., p. C.4.

7. Suggested by James Squire in a speech entitled "What Will Be Basic in the Next Quarter Century?" NCTE Secondary School English Conference, Boston, 1976.

8. Other articles by the author dealing with in-depth reading are "Reading Skills for Advanced Students: By Osmosis or by Instruction?" Reading Improvement, January, 1974; "Developing Special Skills for Reading the Genres," Reading Improvement, Fall, 1977; "All the World's a Stage," Connecticut English Journal, October, 1978; "Using the Power of Comparison for Teaching the Power of Language," Focus, Southeastern Ohio Journal of English, Spring, 1979; "Know or Listen to Those Who Know," Reading Improvement, Spring, 1980.

ON THE FIRST PERSON NARRATOR IN YA NOVELS...

It is significant that so many of the Y.A. books use the first person. The teenage years are the years that you feel you're the only one "feeling like this" and the personal pronoun in these stories somehow overcomes the aloneness even while asserting the individuality of the writer-storyteller. "I" adds such credibility to a statement. "I" also shares a trust with the reader. *I* am telling *you* *my* secrets, rather than a writer is telling something about a third person.

Randeane Tetu, a former English teacher, Nathan Hale-Ray High School, East Haddam, CT.

The Adolescent in Dramatic Literature

M. Jerry Weiss

The play might be the very thing for many readers, gifted or reluctant, who find pleasure in the power of dialogue, music, lyrics, and script as developed by some of the most successful playwrights in the United States. The effective use of dramatic literature permits young readers to expand their abilities to interpret written symbols in a lively and creative classroom environment. The growing popularity of Readers Theatre emphasizes the need for more teachers to become familiar with the variety of plays which explore the concerns, feelings, actions, attitudes, pains and pleasures of the adolescent years.

Grease, the musical phenomenon by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, with lyrics and music by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, is the longest running play in Broadway history. This rock and roll hit, which spoofs teen-age life in the 1950s, has attracted thousands of theatre goers who want to live (or relive) the "glorious" era of hot rods, "mooning," drive-ins, teen-age angels, school and beauty school drop-outs, proms, slumber parties, and other fads and fashions of the fabulous fifties. Real love, peer pressures, being "cool," happenings and mishaps in school, trying to talk things over with the "pink ladies," or trying to explain it to the gang of guys, emphasize the eternal story of the tempestuous adolescent years.

Gerome Ragni and James Rado, with lyrics by Gerome Ragni and James Rado and music by Galt MacDermot, show the complex feelings of youth as they lived through the turbulent sixties in their controversial musical drama, Hair. The flower children, the search for freedom and identity, the ambivalent feelings about politics, the draft, and war, and the proud and strong statements about love and communal feelings can stimulate strong discussions about this period in the nation's history and the resultant events that would shape the seventies and the now eighties. This is a strong statement in strong language by and about youth and what some perceptions of love and life seem to be. What is reality and what is illusion? Who should have the right to dream? Who has the power to shatter youthful dreams? What powers affect youth? This play will raise more questions than it can answer. Subsequent historical events might provide some of the answers.

Joseph Stein, who took the stories of Sholom Aleichem and developed Fiddler on the Roof, with lyrics by Sheldon Harnick and music by Jerry Bock, created theatrical magic in telling the story of a hard-working Jewish family who struggled to survive in a small country town in tsarist Russia in the 1900s. Tevye's three lovely daughters sing about their hopes for love and life in a hit song, "Matchmaker," and reveal a rebelliousness which later

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affects the traditions and relationships within the family. What is a tradition? Can it protect one from oppression? Are there alternatives? And although all concerned know that breaking with tradition is a hard, sometimes an embarrassing and humiliating thing to go through, the characters in this play strongly affirm their love and concern for the ones who bear the sting of such behavior. What is the family? How deep are the roots? What nourishes those feelings and personal commitments to one another?

Arthur Laurents, who adapted Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, and used the lyrics of Stephen Sondheim and the music of Leonard Bernstein, won well-deserved awards in his theatrical creation, West Side Story, which is now thrilling Broadway audiences again with a hit revival. Teen-age gangs, loyalties, sensitivities, bravado, and all of the passions of young love, forbidden and destined to cause pain and death, are displayed stirringly in a story filled with strong dialogue, memorable songs and lyrics, and brilliant choreography. Tony and Maria are theatrical legends in their intense portraits of star-crossed lovers. Of what value is one's "turf" when humans are frightened and develop hostilities and hatreds? What do the Jets or the Sharks prove in their fierce pride and prejudices? What elements in the environment contribute to such polarized feelings among people in a community?

Prejudice can be a strong theme in dramatic literature. Robert Anderson, in Tea and Sympathy, shows the painful effects that a group of boys at a boarding school have on a lonely and sensitive boy who is the butt of their ridicule and persecution. The boys challenge Tom's manliness and spread rumors about him until he agrees to have an affair with a prostitute in town. Tom is not able to fulfill the sexual assignment, and the boys continue to ridicule him and to shun him, convinced that he is not masculine. Who starts the rumors? Why? What are the physical and psychological effects on those who feel they march to a different drummer and still feel the strong need to belong? What is "masculinity"? What is "femininity"? Who determines the standards for acceptance as "a real man" or as "a real woman"?

Real problems can evolve when there is a communications breakdown between parents and teen-agers. James Leo Herlihy and William Noble have developed a compelling and compassionate play, Blue Denim, in which the adolescents have a real need to talk things over with an older person and are frighteningly frustrated as they face a series of problems and need help, love, and understanding. Adults often set the standards for "acceptable" behavior; but what is one to do when "to err is human" and the consequences are serious?

Reginald Rose, in his television play, Crime in the Streets, has developed a powerful story about juvenile deliquency. Frankie, is a tough kid who is responding to a home environment in which his father has abandoned the family, the mother works hard, and a younger brother seems to get all of the attention. A social worker tries to help Frankie as the gang plans to murder McAllister, who has informed on another gang member. Frankie really needs love and attention, and this play presents a climax that will captivate any audience, including teen-agers, as the murder scene reaches a peak.

What do teen-agers want out of a home life? How much responsibility should be given to them? In the M. Jerry Weiss guidance play, Parents Are People, Carol agrees to babysit with her younger brother while their parents attend a special dinner affair. In the meantime, Les, the younger brother, has invited one of his friends, Jimmy, to come over for a little while. While the two boys are playing, Carol gets a very special phone call for a wonderful date with a football hero. Carol decides to break away for what she thinks will be a very short time, and she leaves the two young boys on their own. The two boys get carried away in their game of cowboy and Indians. Just at the point in the play when some very serious problems can arise, Jimmy's mother comes looking for her son and sees the danger about to take place. She can't understand how the parents can leave two little boys on their own, and when the parents return, before Carol gets back from her date, Jimmy's mother lets the parents have a good piece of her mind. Les' parents are startled by the sequence of events which have taken place. They can't understand how Carol would leave Les and Jimmy. When Carol does return, Carol is in a state of ecstasy about the unforgettable date. The parents don't know how to confront her. Is Les their responsibility or was he Carol's? How should they deal with Carol? Will it do any good at this point? The play ends on that note, and a group discussion involving the audience is to take place through which the roles and responsibilities of the characters are analyzed and some possible solutions are suggested. Students have been assigned to write the final scene, and a variety of responses are often presented. What experiences prepare adolescents to live up to their responsibilities? What should happen if they don't?

Romantic notions among teen-agers provide good grist for the playwright. Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt, in their long running off-Broadway musical, The Fantasticks, tell the story of two youngsters, living next door to each other, who refuse to follow their parents' wishes that they fall in love and marry. The young man leaves home and returns later quite disillusioned. The young girl has her share of disappointing experiences also. Then the two fathers decide to build a wall between their homes and feign a hostile role towards each other. At that point the two young people do get together on their own and decide to marry. When it comes to love, the teen-agers run their own course and rebel against the best laid plans.

Michael Stewart, Lee Adams, and Charles Strouse show the absurdities that can befall a family when an all-American teenage girl wins a chance to participate in a publicity stunt with her idol, rock and roll star Conrad Birdie, who is going to bestow a farewell kiss upon her as he makes his farewell appearance before going into the U. S. Army. The coast-to-coast shenanigans, including a special guest appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show, allow Bye Bye Birdie to present one of Broadways more cheerful views of the adolescent years. Talk is now underway to bring Birdie back in the year ahead in a new production which will feature his return from the Army, his new recording hits, and the effects on his fans from coast-to-coast.

Booth Tarkington, in 1918, adapted his popular novel, Seventeen, for the stage. This is a delightful, frothy, nonsensical look at young love with Silly Bill falling head over heels for baby-talking Lola. In addition, Bill has to put up with a kid sister who has the power to tease and taunt the young romantic lover. It's silly, but yet it seems to work since the romantically inclined just want June moon, the stars, and that very special person, and one day they will acquire the strength to get rid of those who would dare to intrude on their passions.

The mighty Eugene O'Neill tackles the love theme in Ah, Wilderness! Rebellious youth, Richard, upsets his family and causes quite a disturbance in a small Connecticut town with his nonconforming attitudes and behavior. The play provides laughter, compassion, and a special warmth which brings the play to a happy conclusion.

Elizabeth Swados, in her recent play Runaways, presents a series of case histories of young runaways who reveal, mostly through songs, why they are running, what has happened to them, and what might happen in the future. So many things, big events and trivial incidents, can set off a rash of emotional fireworks which can lead to feelings of frustration and alienation. Sometimes adults trigger the desperate actions; in other cases it is difficult to find a real cause. The consequences of running away are not glamorized. Running away seldom provides the solution to the real problems. The play is worthy of careful study in these times when runaways are making more and more headlines.

The adolescent is, indeed, a complex character. In these plays the characters may seem exaggerated; but in too many headlines in the nation's papers zanier stories are appearing about our youth. In their achievements and in their failings teenagers want and warrant attention. Playwrights provide a wonderful opportunity for another dimension for studying the rebellious, the unpredictable, turbulent adolescent years.

INFORMATION FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS

If you are a new member of CCTE this year, you might want to own copies of recent back issues of the Connecticut English Journal. We still have copies of POETRY: READING, WRITING, AND ANALYZING IT for $3.75 and TEACHING ENGLISH TO THE HANDICAPPED for $3.25. If you identify yourself to us as a new CCTE member, we'll send you both of those issues for $6.00 as long as they last. Send your check, made out to CCTE, to the CEJ editor, English Department, Central Connecticut State College, New Britain, CT 06050.

Poetry for Adolescents — Responding

Michael Angelotti

At a recent conference of English teachers, my subgroup was asked to respond, cold turkey, to Howard Nemerov's "The Companions" and Ted Hughes' "February." Our initial task was to decide which one to discuss first. After a quick scan I elected Nemerov because that poem looked more accessible to quick response (it begins "There used to be gods in everything, and now they've gone," and I can get into mythological allusions). Hughes' poem looked impregnable ("The wolf with its belly stitched full of big pebbles;/ Nibelung wolves barbed like a black pineforest/Against a red sky, over blue snow; or that long grin/Above the tucked coverlet-none suffice.") The group thought the same way; although after analysis, we agreed that "The Companions" was rather shallow and poorly written, whereas "February," more difficult to penetrate at first, was rich with meaning and more satisfying to read. Responding to these poems was frustrating to me because I had so little time for private interpretation, and I am not very good at spontaneous public response to literature. Neither were the others.

The point of this exercise was to examine our own processes of reading and responding to poetry as a way to clarify what we are attempting to achieve in literature classes. The conclusions that we drew were rather obvious ones:

1. Reading and responding are interlocking processes.
2. Reading involves readability, reading abilities, motivation, and environmental pressures; that is, it is an interior and an exterior act. The object of reading a poem is to experience it. People read poems differently, experience them differently, and respond to them differently.
3. Responding may be to substance, form, or both and may take any number of emotional and intellectual forms--some immediate, others delayed. Response is almost always negative and minimal in forced situations or where lack of knowledge prevails.
4. We teachers ignore most of what we know (no matter how obvious) about reading and responding when we teach literature, an act too much governed by content coverage and arbitrary selection of class materials.

Although a group of English teachers is not a heterogeneous class of teenagers, and given that parallels in poetry reading behavior between teachers and students are easily strained, conclusions one, two, and three seem to be generalizable to adolescent readers of poetry. Four to teachers only.

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Readability, for example, encompasses such factors as syntax, vocabulary, figurative language, poetic form, historical nuance, and subject matter. Reading abilities not only include appropriate linguistic, poetic, and contentive knowledge but also strategies for gaining a literal sense of the poem and reasonable interpretations at various levels of meaning.

Being able to read a poem, of course, is not quite enough. One must be motivated to do so. The more such motivation comes from within, the more likely that comprehension barriers will be overcome by students themselves as a natural consequence of striving to understand. Critical to intrinsic motivation (particularly with adolescents) are interest in subject matter, immediate payoff (pleasure and/or insight), some degree of choice, success, and an honest ear (teacher or peers who care about what they have to say). To "experience" a poem, then, one must be motivated to read it and be able to do so once there. The level and nature of response very much depends on the quality of experiencing the poem. If teaching poetry means something like bringing kids to experience poetry and to respond to it in some public way, then teaching poetry is, quite clearly, a very tall order. But, it can be done.

BEGINNINGS

Beginning close to the language, times, and substance of adolescent life, especially for inexperienced or reluctant poetry readers, is old but good advice. In terms of reading theory, I am suggesting that we begin with something like a language experience approach (see the work of Roach Van Allen) that goes heavily into student talk, writing from that talk, and responding to what has been written. From there, and integrated with student writing, we can ease into more standard poetry. Here is a poem, for example, written by a former seventh grade student of mine in response to an assignment to write of something in his life, however ordinary, that he found interesting:

An Old Black Couple I Know

She just sits
on her old wooden Porch
Smoking her Pipe
with cheap tobacco in it.
Her blind husband
just lays on the bed.
His fever high
not long before he will die.
Both very old
live off of wellfair.
They do allright
while summer is here.
But winter comes by and

Children come and help with the work.
To keep the spirits
out of the house,
There are the horseshoes
on the front of the porch.
One day they will die.
Then there will be
many good memeries.
Memeries remembered of
When they were still Alive.
It will be a sad day when they die.

Barry Shields

Not perfect, but honest. Barry used to buy bait from the old couple and totally captivated the class with his observations of them during his discussion of the poem, which, incidentally, appeared in the May 1977 poetry issue of *The English Journal* (my own poem was rejected). Barry demonstrated to the class that the content of poetry is everywhere in their lives and that everyone can frame experience within at least the semblance of a poem. It was not difficult to slip Langston Hughes' "Mother to Son" and Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish" into the conversation.

OTHER APPROACHES

For one ninth grade class I went to popular song lyrics first and discovered that they were not so intrigued with the poetry of Elton John's lyrics (or anyone else's) as I was, but they were interested in what made a song a song and not a poem. While discussing "Curtains" (Captain Fantastic, MCA, 1975), for example, we noted that it was not complete without the musical arrangement and artist's style. That is, a personal *meaning* of the song required its total environment. But, it was not necessary to literally comprehend either lyric or arrangement (intended meaning or form) to *enjoy* the song, although I suspect that those songs that last the longest have the more meaningful lyrics. A poem, on the other hand, is usually more complex and verbally complete than a song lyric. It requires much more of the reader's experiential background in form and meaning to complete its environment as well as a striving for reasonable literal comprehension and likely interpretations of figurative language. As a result, the meaning of a poem, once achieved, is more truly individualized to the reader.

Another technique that draws on student language resources is a collaborative writing approach. I would bring my own unfinished poems to a class as a problem to be solved, or they would make their own writing (problems) public by presenting them on overhead transparencies and inviting all of us to respond, to participate in their creative processes. Much learning about poetry took place as we bandied about possible titles, or argued the most appropriate word, or whether or not to delete a line or image. Removing bits of established poems had a similar effect, although we were not always convinced that the poet's choices were necessarily better than our own.

Responding to popular film and fiction (the more bizarre the better) makes provocative content for student poems. Can you imagine poetic responses to Poe's "The Black Cat," *Jaws*, or *10*? Here are two poems written by Australian students, published in *Friday Writing* by Devonport High School, Tasmania, that could be reactions to *Jaws* (though sharks are such a reality there that it is hard to find a line between fact and fiction):

Shark

It swam deep and slowly
Gracefully along its path
streamlined from nose to tail tip
Zeroing in like a torpedo in the
dark.

Unaware of his existence
They played and splashed with
joy
Thinking how great the sea was
Then down went the innocent child.

Everyone was struck with horror
No one could utter a word
The child had vanished without a
trace
Except for the blood stained sand.

Michael Leahy
Grade 10

Shark

Silently, as graceful as can be
He slides through the water,
His eyes are fixed on me.

Slowly, down goes the fin
The air is filled with screams,
I can sense him closing in.

Suddenly, I stiffen
He's right under me
I see the white streak glisten

As he passes me by.

Dianne Savage
Grade 10

A parody of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" (found among others in the March 1976 *Mad* comics) begins like this:

> In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree,
> With marble bathtubs in each john
> And ev'ry room a great salon
> To please his family.

What better way to get into form than through parody and imitations of parodies read? What are the possibilities for teaching satire from *Saturday Night Live*?

One thing that all the poems and approaches mentioned have in common is an emphasis on poetic expression closer to contemporary speech than to the literary language of much traditional poetry. This is not to suggest that traditional poetry is to be abandoned, but rather to point out that response is the key to a successful poetry class, and to respond one must understand. When students are inexperienced poetry readers, they are more likely to respond to meaningful poetry in familiar language than to meaningful poetry in literary language. They also tend to read and respond to traditional poetry better if they have had prior success with similar forms written in familiar language. The contemporary and the traditional, however, must be fused if a full and accurate view of "poetry" is to be developed.

SOURCES

Finding adolescent poetry "written in familiar language" is another matter. The sources that I have used in this article suggest that there is no generic adolescent poetry (written for and about adolescents by professional writers) as there is an adolescent or young adult novel. For better or worse, we are forced to scramble for class materials beyond what is available in grade level anthologies. The popular song lyric comes closest to poetry written for adolescents, although one must be terribly selective among those. There have been, in fact, occasional collections of song lyrics published with the adolescent audience in mind, such as McGraw-Hill's Always Begin Where You Are. In it, Walter Lamb arranges contemporary song lyrics and poetry thematically. Stephen Dunning, Edward Lueders, and Hugh Smith's Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle... and Some Haystacks Don't Even Have Any Needle still remain as anthologies of mainly adult poetry most sensitive to the general adolescent audience. Other sources of adolescent poetry outside the classroom itself are anthologies of poems written for children, recent May issues of The English Journal, and collected student writing--although your school literary magazine is as good a source as any other. The May 1979 English Journal, in fact, contains an article specifically directed to "the publication of student's literary writings" (pp. 86-90).

As evidenced by issue upon issue of The English Journal and various NCTE affiliate publications, the most promising continuing source of technique in teaching poetry to adolescents is the secondary classroom teacher. Dunning's work on teaching poetry, Teaching Literature to Adolescents: Poetry (Scott, Foresman, 1975), is still the most helpful (practical) commercial guide that I have found on the subject. In it, for example, he discusses nine principles for teaching poetry which emphasize that teachers should themselves be enthusiastic readers of poetry and should keep experience with poetry at the center of their teaching. Michael True, in an English Journal article (May 1980, p. 42), agrees with Dunning but also points to "the necessity of reading poems aloud" as the prime element in experiencing poetry. Good advice. Another excellent resource for teachers is Norton and Gretton's Writing Incredibly Short Plays, Poems, Stories (Harcourt, 1972). It demonstrates clearly how to integrate writing poetry and the learning of poetic form--an exciting book.

POETIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Of course there is a good bit of personal philosophy underlying anyone's approach to teaching poetry. I am no different. I believe that you learn to appreciate poetry by experiencing as much poetry of as many varieties at as many levels as possible. The focus is on poems, and you learn to sense poetry out of that. You need the first experience of revelation--a meaning discovered that wasn't there before--that you uncover for yourself and then find out to be true. Then you become hooked on poetry reading. You need the first bit of satisfaction in writing a poem, and the first bit of praise (that you believe) from someone else, and you are hooked on poetry writing. It probably takes the continuous interaction of writing, reading, speaking, and listening to poetry to develop a poetic consciousness--that particular perception that allows writer and reader to derive meaning from experience, to sense significance, and to communicate in poetic form.

Poetic consciousness is nothing more than intuition applied to poetry. Some people learn to be intuitive as a natural consequence of growing up and easily read and respond to poetry with depth. Others need to be taught and can develop a poetic intuition through immersion in appropriate poetry and inductive teaching of poetic form and meaning. Teaching poetry must be directed to helping students develop a poetic consciousness.

Finally, it is the absence of poetic consciousness that causes many people to read and write poetry superficially. They never quite penetrate the surface, missing the intelligence behind the poem, reading as though the poem were speaking to no intelligence at all. Appropriately, I wrote, and subsequently published in the spring 1979 issue of the Connecticut English Journal, p. 82, a poem (for my students) that speaks to this point. It follows:

Poetry Is

Poetry Is
Definitely
For salty submarines
Not Sunday sailboaters.

I discovered that
While diving

Deep

Deep

Into a poem.

The quality of response to poetry is linked to the way one takes to the water. But, as one of my precocious students quipped (in response to the poem), "There is a danger in diving deep, too, if you don't come up slow, you may get the bends." A most unpleasant response.

Science Fiction Literature: A Boon to Teachers and Students

Barbara J.W. Matthews

Science fiction novels and short stories have long been favorities of students. However, some teachers shun the use of science fiction writings in their curriculum as not having enough literary merit. This article will explore two aspects of science fiction literature in the classroom: why students read it so avidly and why teachers can find it worth teaching.

The composition and stylistic factors involved in a science fiction novel or short story make it very readable for young adults. In most science fiction writing there is one or at most two plot lines to follow. This allows students to comprehend the story line with comparable ease. The characters in science fiction are usually clearly drawn, and their traits have been honed down to only the essentials by the author. Enough information is given so each character becomes real to the reader, but the descriptions of the characters are not so detailed as to lose the student's attention. Well developed and realistic characters can be found in Robert C. O'Brien's novel Z for Zachariah. Science fiction authors also write very vivid but limited amounts of description. This technique supplies students with lively settings without their becoming drawn out and, from the student's point of view, boring. Settings with sharp and colorful details are featured in the short story "Desert Encounter" by I. Rosakhvatsky, from the collection entitled Science Fiction III, edited by Robert Pierce and Murray Suid. Lastly, many science fiction novels and short stories have a twist or surprise ending. This type of climax is especially attractive to young adult readers.

Science fiction also is viewed by students as an unintimidating type of literature. This is because the vocabulary used, except for occasional technical terms, is relatively simple. Likewise, the sentence structure is mainly straight forward. Because of both of these traits, students do not feel they have to struggle to read the piece.

Teachers can find science fiction literature valuable on both thematic and pragmatic levels. Science fiction novels and short stories mirror the sociological problems of the author's time. Because each author must reflect the society he is living in, the concerns of his world are the themes of his stories. Seeing these contemporary topics pictured in a future date allows the student to view them with new insight. Many of our current problematic situations are depicted in the novel The Dispossessed, by Ursual K. Le Guin.

The value of progress is examined in science fiction and is frequently seen in a negative light. Especially in America, where progress is almost always linked with a positive perception

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of the future, the theme is of obvious importance. Science fiction warns the reader to examine each progressive step carefully before taking it. This very idea is utilized by Joyce Carol Oates in her short story "The Brain of Dr. Vincente," from her collection entitled The Poisoned Kiss and Other Stories for the Portugese.

Although it may seem contradictory, science fiction also frequently shows the future as holding hope, even if the present is pessimistic. Because so much of the literature taught on the secondary level has a depressing or tragic tone, it is a pleasant change for the students and the teachers to find a piece of writing which is positive in nature.

All of these thematic issues help give weight to an area of literature which is sometimes viewed as the "weak sister" of writing.

From a practical point of view, science fiction writing can be taught in many creative ways. Many of the themes, characters, and settings in science fiction literature can be translated into effective, interesting student projects. If the whole class has read the same science fiction novel, a worthwhile project is to handle the book as if it were a movie. Students interested in art can be in charge of designing advertisements for the new movie, depicting characters or action scenes described in the novel. These students may want to draw on the expertise of the art department to help them create effective marquee posters or to design a newspaper campaign to sell the movie to the public.

Students who enjoy writing may wish to re-write a portion of the novel in dialogue form, including the appropriate sound effects, and tape it on a tape recorder. This, when played back, will become an effective radio advertisement for the whole class to enjoy. Or, these same students may enjoy writing a review of the new movie, first closely analyzing it and then advising their audience whether or not to see this film.

Students involved in drama may want to create their interpretation of a set for the film. The drama teacher may be asked to explain how blocking is done for this particular assignment. Hence, a science fiction unit can be used to explore more than literary avenues.

In conclusion, science fiction literature can be an exciting and non-threatening experience for students, and a creative and rewarding experience for teachers.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO READ ABOUT?

The topic for the spring 1981 issue of the CEJ is already set. But we'd like to know what themes you would like to see us focus on in future issues. Drop us a card or letter describing your needs and interests. We'd like to know what you'd like to read about.

Walkabout: Readable Means Teachable

Philip T. Freemer

It is obvious to anyone involved with the teaching of literature today that the "Young Adult" novel is very much with us. Although there is much writing marketed specifically for the adolescent audience, most of this writing has been dismissed by many English teachers as "subliterature." In fact, some feel there is a dearth of worthwhile or teachable stories emanating from this particular publishing circle. In truth, however, there have been novels written which, although they may lack classical stature in the field of literature, are nevertheless highly teachable and of redeeming value as a class activity. I offer Walkabout as an example of one of these.

Perhaps the most outstanding quality of James Vance Marshall's novel is its "readability" for junior high students. Marshall has a clear uncluttered style that appeals to even the most subversive non-reader. His story line is divided into a series of short chapters each of which ends in such a way that the reader has little time to consider closing the book. Instead, the reader is carried along from one chapter to the next with an almost continuous momentum.

Another factor which adds to the readability of the novel is the limited number of characters. There is Mary, a teenage white girl from North Carolina and her eight year old brother, Peter, who survive the crash of a small plane in the Australian Outback. The two eventually meet up with an Aborigine (about Mary's age) who is ultimately responsible for saving their lives.

Add to the characteristics already mentioned a simple "struggle for survival" conflict, and you have the makings of an adolescent bestseller. The range of possible thematic considerations is unending. There is sibling rivalry, black/white relations, male/female coming of age, and cultural shock, just to name a few.

Because of these readability factors I have found Walkabout well suited to the junior high level. The novel is extremely flexible in that it fits in equally well with a unit approach (the novel as a distinct genre), a thematic approach, or an individualized approach to reading literature. Because of its clearness and simplicity, the novel provides an excellent opportunity for the study of setting, characterization, plot, and theme.

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In the classroom, I have found individualized study through the use of an activity packet to be most effective. Projects in the packet have included: a research paper (Australian flora and fauna), slide presentations (also of flora and fauna), journalistic writing (newspaper account of the plane crash), interviews, writing an obituary, diaries, letter writing, rewriting the ending of the novel, philosophical considerations, "What if ...", and debates.

In this age of media bombardment, whether a novel such as Walkabout will become a "classic" is really not an issue. What is significant for the junior high teacher of literature is that here is a novel non-reading students will become involved with. That involvement then makes the "teaching" of the novel a possibility.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

To Spoil the Sun by Joyce Rockwood.
Dell, 1979. 223 pp. $1.50.

Joyce Rockwood spends the first 170 pages of this book explaining, in detail, complicated family relations existing in the Cherokee nation of the early 1500's. Motivation for action, however, though an integral part of any novel, should not be so involved nor take so long to unravel that any desire to read further and see what action the motivation leads to is destroyed. This is a basic prerequisite for any novelist and is most critical when the novelist selects as her audience high school readers. If the reader of To Spoil the Sun is able to plod through the tedium of long speeches, bewildering descriptions of convoluted family ties, and aimless introspection, the last fifty pages of this novel are rewarding. At last the reader can walk with the Cherokee mother and her two small children as they leave the village. Tainted now with smallpox, the white man's fever, they must endure banishment from the only home they've ever known and from the loved ones they must forever leave behind. The reader experiences their fear, anger, frustration, and despair as the disease ravages even this tiny remnant of a once powerful and proud nation. It is questionable, however, if the average high school reader will witness such tragedy in this book. To Spoil the Sun will probably be closed permanently long before a reader gets to page 172.

Reviewed by Michael J. Valovcin, Seymour High School,
Seymour, CT.

Recurring Themes in Recent Mexican American Fiction

Raymond J. Rodriguez

As the number of Cubans entering the United States swelled to a point where no one knew what to do with them, the presence of Spanish-speaking Americans became undeniable. That presence, for most Americans, forced us to admit a number of uncomfortable realities: we are incapable of accepting large waves of non-English speaking immigrants as we did in the past (although the reality was that we never did welcome unlimited numbers); most of the Cubans seemed to believe the mythology of limitless American opportunity which we had projected to the world and knew in our hearts to be untrue; many Americans do not want neighbors whose language and values are different from those of the majority; and, as revealed by the Cubans in Florida who arrived before this latest Cuban influx, many non-English speaking folks with different values can survive in the open American economy and can possibly, as well as threateningly, become more successful than their English-speaking neighbors.

Our current concerns with "the Cuban problem" provide us as English teachers with a foundation for approaching current fiction by and about Mexican Americans, a cultural mixture that may some day become the largest single minority in our country. Unfortunately, in contrast to literature by and about Black Americans, the quantity of Mexican American literature in the classroom remains low (though there is a consistent production largely under the imprint of small presses such as Quinto Sol, Editorial Justa, New America, Tonatiuh International, and Pajarito Publications, as well as those copyrighted by the authors themselves). The Cuban/Mexican American parallels, it seems to me, are contained within the recurring themes of Mexican American literature. The universal nature of these themes enables the English teacher to incorporate Mexican American literature into the regular classroom with ease, thereby adding greater breadth to the students' understandings of United States literatures, cultures, and aspirations.

These recurring themes are: 1) The Migration, 2) The Dislocation from the Past, 3) The Search for a Spiritual Identity, and 4) The Transcendence of the Human Soul. All are interrelated, and all, much to our advantage as English teachers, communicate to adolescents as they face elements of those themes in their own lives. The works that I have selected fit well into other traditional themes treated in our classes--e.g., Man Against Man, The Search for Justice, Odysseys--yet I focus upon the literature as Mexican American works first and universal works second, even though I would want teachers to reverse that order.

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NOVELS

In an earlier bibliography[1], I mentioned only one of the works cited here, but it serves as an important beginning. Rudolfo A. Anaya's Bless Me, Ultima still captures the essence of what it means to grow up Mexican American in the United States today. Antonio Marez, the young narrator, is born to parents whose conflicting dreams for the future cause them to struggle against one another while struggling with each other to hold the family together. The father comes from a long line of vaqueros, and he yearns to migrate to California where the good life can be found. The mother's family has always farmed, so she continues to seek the good life in the land. World War II has changed Antonio's older brothers, weakening their family ties, and they leave their father behind to travel to the cities. For all these characters, the past is rapidly decaying as a foundation, forcing them to face the future with uncertainty. Into this situation returns Ultima, an old woman respected by the family, a curandera. The young Antonio turns to her for his non-school education. Ultima leads Antonio through the spiritual side of nature, raising many disturbing questions in his mind and causing him to become aware of the Golden Carp--the part mythological, part-real, part-spiritual fish that Antonio only begins to understand. Inevitably, the insights that Antonio receives enable him to realize that throughout life he must choose; that realization is essential to Bless Me, Ultima, for it is a novel of choices. We have all had to face that as adolescents--choices, choices based upon the past and the future, our families, our friends, ourselves, the material, and the spiritual. In choice is anguish, but the act of choosing itself continues life.

Anaya's second novel, Heart of Aztlan, continues the themes begun in Bless Me, Ultima, but this time the setting is The Barrio, the inner city to which so many Mexican Americans have migrated. Anaya employs devices that were successful in his earlier novel to communicate the frustrations of having to compete in an Anglo-dominated world, and this becomes an angrier, perhaps less successful work. The family of the main character, Jason, again a young man, are forced for economic reasons to surrender their land and migrate to the city where they join Jason's older brother, Robert. For the parents, the city is an alien land where one must struggle to maintain only the vestiges of roots. Jason's younger brother quickly succumbs to the temptations of gang life, his sisters to the preoccupation of chasing boys. His father sinks into depression as his traditional influence over the family slips from him. In place of an Ultima is Crispin, the blind, old story teller and singer. In place of the Golden Carp is the vaguely defined Magic Rock, La Piedra Mala, and a world of dreams. In the end, a new spirit of the barrio replaces that lost in the past, but Anaya may have forced it too artificially.

Anaya's latest work, Tortuga, moves further from purely Mexican American experience to a children's hospital where the desperately crippled and terminally ill are blended in the common goal of seeking some release from their suffering. The main character, an adolescent, is nicknamed Tortuga, Turtle, when the doctor encases him in a plaster body cast to assist his recovery from a broken back. Outside the hospital rises a dark hill, also

La Tortuga, "a real sea turtle which wandered north when the oceans dried...waiting for another earth change to come along and free it...." In this work, La Tortuga becomes less spiritual and more purely symbolic than were the Golden Carp or La Piedra Mala. Inside the hospital is a Boschian world of characters and events. But those who have the strength seek to transcend their physical prisons. Physically some are hardly human at all, but spiritually they represent a humanity that all can respond to from their soul. Perhaps considering this work can bring our students and ourselves to confront humanity more openly.

Orlando Romero's Nambe Year One may cause some adolescent readers much confusion, for the narrative jumps in place and time without clear links. Throughout the novel wanders the image of The Gypsy, both real and spiritual, living, dead, and, at times, perhaps imagined, the link with the past for the main character, who ranges in age from young boy to young man. This novel is about the young man's attempts to understand his life in terms of his past--his father and grandfather, the stories of his village--and his present--including his relationship with his son. Life is itself a migration from the Past through the Future. We do not end, but continue our grandparents in our grandchildren.

In La Conquistadora, Fray Angelico Chavez attempts a task which most historians and novelists might fear as bound to fail ultimately: the autobiography of a statue of The Virgin, brought to New Mexico in 1625. Younger adolescents may appreciate the account for the action of the past, older adolescents for its different way of presenting history. Though history, it is fiction, but as fiction it suffers from having to be historical.

SHORT STORIES

Collections of short stories remain the easiest route to blending Mexican American literature into the curriculum. Sabine R. Ulibarri's My Grandmother Smoked Cigars and a collection edited by Anaya and Antonio Marquez, Cuentos Chicanos, for example, will each enhance classroom selections. Ulibarri's sequel to his earlier Tierra Amarilla continues to prove him an excellent story teller. His stories, printed on opposing pages in Spanish and English, range from the joking to the serious and are filled with details that enable adolescents to relate to what could be for most a foreign experience. Cuentos Chicanos contains the works of new and well-published writers, some in English and some in Spanish, but also ranges through the emotions, though the stories are of uneven quality. Its value is in its recency, revealing the continuing themes.

OTHER TITLES

While I have concentrated on only a few novels, most notably those of Anaya whose works are so essential to any study of Mexican American authors, other novels that teachers might consider include: Ron Arias' The Road to Tomazunchale, nominated for the National Book Award; Alfredo de la Torres' The Lion Is Out of the Cage; and

Rolando Honojosa's Estampas del Valle.

Additional collections of short stories include: De Colores; Alurista et al., Flor y Canto: An Anthology of Chicano Literature; and Rudolfo Anaya (trans.) Cuentos: Tales from the Hispanic Southwest.

For Mexican American literature to have the greatest value in the classroom, we ought to avoid setting aside a unit entitled something like "Chicano Literature," unless that is something that the community and students specifically desire. The literature melds into mainstream United States literature very well. Huckleberry Finn, for example, reveals the same themes I have suggested for Mexican American literature. So much of the outstanding literature of our country reflects the journey motif, if not the physical journey, the journey of the soul. Ours has been and continues to be a nation of individuals moving and searching, dislocated from our roots, but somehow transcending the impermanence of our lives.

Finally, one Anglo author's sensitivity toward the Mexican American experience has produced two outstanding novels: John Nichols' The Milagro Beanfield War and The Magic Journey. The Milagro Beanfield War captures in one of the funniest novels I've read the conflicts between Anglos and Mexican Americans in northern New Mexico. Many New Mexican Anglos think the Anglos are stereotyped, but not the "Gavachos." Perhaps that speaks for the author's ability to characterize well. In contrast, The Magic Journey portrays the dark side of the same basic situation--the exploitation of Mexican Americans, Pueblos, and well-meaning Anglos. Other novelists have written about the Anglo experience of living near Mexican Americans, for example Richard Bradford in Red Sky at Morning and So Far from Heaven, but they have not captured the tensions and feelings as well as Nichols has. (And one must always be aware of ethnic literature exploitations such as Frank Bonham's Viva Chicano, which are simply adolescent novels in ethnic guise.) Both of Nichols' novels present aspects of the Mexican American experience at an emotional distance that most Mexican American authors have yet to achieve, and perhaps ought not to, for if they did, the themes that I outlined earlier would be weakened and inevitably lost.

At a time when we Americans continue to search for some meaning in our history and in the events we are experiencing today, Mexican American authors may not provide us that meaning, but thoughtful consideration of their themes may, especially as they apply to the lives of us all.

FOOTNOTE

1. Rodrigues, Raymond J., "A Few Directions in Chicano Literature," English Journal, 62, May 1973, pp. 724-729.

The Challenge of Alan Garner's YA Fiction

Linda Shadlow

Finding books that both entertain and challenge an adolescent reader who has moved beyond Blume and Danziger and through Cormier and Zindel can be frustrating. I had wrongly assumed that beyond William Golding, British young adults were reading the same YA books my students were. An article by Ken Donelson, "Across the Ocean and into our Classroom: Some Quality Young Adult Literature from Great Britain,"[1] introduced me to some authors and books that as a reader I found fascinating and as a teacher I found invaluable. Alan Garner's books deserve to be recommended to students who are eager for "something new" and "something more."

British author Garner writes books that are easier to describe with analogies than with adjectives. Recall those surrealistic moments you have between wakefulness and sleep when recognizable bits of your life's action mingle with the beginnings of your dreams. Remember the unsettling feeling of your last *deja vu* experience and the inadequacy you felt in expressing it by *saying*, "I've done this before." Garner puts the main characters of his three most prominent YA books, *Elidor*, *The Owl Service*, and *Red Shift*, into the doorway of those *fourth dimensional experiences; his plots* make it possible--even necessary--for those characters to wander back and forth between the real and the surreal with increasing complexity and power.

Deceivingly, the plots can be explained in a manner simple enough for a book jacket blurb or library bulletin board propaganda: *Elidor*--Four adventurous children explore an old church and discover *the fan*tasy kingdom of Elidor. In order to protect the kingdom, they agree to take some of its treasures with them for safe-keeping. Once back in their own neighborhood, they try to decide if Elidor is a real place or just a spot in their imaginations that will go away if they deny its existence. *The Owl Service*--Three children find an old set of dishes in an *attic. They learn* about an ancient Welsh myth that involves love, jealousy, and hatred that is somehow tied symbolically to the patterns in the dishes. They try to discover if they have power over the myth or if it rules them. *Red Shift*--Three young men from different periods of history face *difficult* decisions about themselves and the people they love.

But Garner never intended to write one-dimensional stories. He explained his intentions of writing books that were more complex than simple, story-lined plots in an interview with Margaret Meek in the *Times Literary Supplement*: "The age of the individual does not *necessarily relate to maturity*. Therefore, in order to connect, the book must be written for all levels of experience."[2] So the library bulletin board display should say more: *Elidor*--The children,

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discovering a psychological passageway between the world of Manchester and the kingdom of Elidor, find themselves in both places but with different symbols for the same things. As they traverse both worlds, they find that one world is like the undeveloped negative of the next. At certain spots in both the physical and psychological world, one place breaks through into the other. *The Owl Service*--The power of the Fourth Branch of the ancient Welsh *Mabinogeon* is released when the children find a set of dishes. The emotions and the plot of the old myth control the dreams and actions of the children who try to understand its hold on them and their parents. The plot functions like a triple exposure: three sets of action, three sets of characters (the mythic, the parents, the children), all frozen by a camera's snap in the same pose...and glued on a scrap book page to be made sense of. *Red Shift*--The stories of three young men are told as though there is a place in existence where the repetition of history occurs simultaneously. Macey, a second century warrior in Britain, Thomas, a villager caught up in the seventeenth century British Civil War, and Tom, a twentieth century adolescent, share the same settings, sensitivities, and possessions. Their lives are intertwined, but they don't consciously know that. They each struggle with the vision of the others but can't know that vision because everything is happening at the same time.

Among the critical acclaim and honors (the Carnegie Medal, the Guardian Award, the Hans Christian Anderson citation), the Garner books also exist with observations that children are "unequal to the demands of the story."[3] The criticism is directed at both the characters in the stories (they do not match the size of their involvement) and the young readers (Garner doesn't really write for children). There is a progression of difficulty in these three books, but an awareness of that progression can aid a teacher in recommending them to students.

Elidor is a story where the shifts from one world to the next are clearly drawn. It could easily be read aloud to students (*Booklist*, June 15, 1967, recommends it for students in grades four through six, but both the intrigue and the writing style make it captivating for readers of all ages).[4] In *The Owl Service*, the reader is shown the connections between three mythic characters and plots through action and dialogue, but he/she must piece most of it together during the reading. The book is required reading in many British schools, and the *Center for Children's Books Bulletin* (December 1968) recommends it for grades five through eight.[5] The publication of *Red Shift* (Garner spent seven years writing it) brought a flurry of reviews pointing out the difficulties it presented to the reader:

> Complex and intricate, and it makes heavy demands on the reader's intelligence, concentration and background knowledge.[6]
>
> The dividing lines between children's books and adult books have grown more and more faint.[7]

> The final puzzle is not that they (the characters) are so obscure, but why the author should wish to make them so.[8]

The staccato dialogue in Red Shift is so bare and so important that there is no room for casual reading. The book is recommended on the book jacket for grades nine and up. The Center for Children's Books Bulletin characterized it as "almost more an adult book that some young people will find absorbing than an absorbing story for young people."[9]

But Garner doesn't set out to write books for children. That is why the books present a challenge to young readers. Justin Wintle has described Garner as "undoubtedly the most gifted but perhaps the most problematical author writing for children today."[10] The stories capture a part of the collective unconscious that we all experience moments of but are taught to ignore as we "grow up." I have the feeling that, as an adult, I read these books in a different way than I might have as a junior or senior high student. After finishing Elidor, I had to go back to the Elidor adventure in the first section of the book in order to make sense of all the intricacies in the later sections. When I was through, I jotted down the following note to myself: "I am afraid I struggled too hard as an adult reader to understand everything rather than enjoy it."

None of the reviews I found referred to the reactions of young adults; the reviewers based their comments on their own reading experiences and knowledge of children. With books like Garner's, that may not be valid: Aiden Chambers wrote, "As I read I was acutely aware of being tested. Can you or can't you find the hidden reference?"[11] That reviewer has a lengthy history of English teachers behind her telling her how to read in order to find the answers she might need on a quiz--not how to find the experience.

Meek has commented that "Garner's bond with his young readers is to show them what fiction can do."[12] Those possibilities are what many of my students seek and what prompt me to recommend Garner's books to them. In recommending Garner's books, teachers should be guided by those possibilities and not by the limits which the intricacies may set on our adult abilities to enjoy first and understand later. The books are layered experiences for involved readers. When interviewed by Meek for the Times Literary Supplement, Garner did say, "I try to write onions."[13]

FOOTNOTES

1. Ken Donelson, "Across the Ocean and Into Our Classroom: Some Quality Young Adult Literature from Great Britain," Alan Review, 7, Winter 1980, pp. 5-7.

2. Margaret Meek, "A View From the Steeple," Times Literary Supplement (United Kingdom), 29 September 1978, p. 1081.

3. J. R. Townsend, A Sense of Story, Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1971, p. 115.

4. Review of *Elidor*, ed. Edna Vanek, *Booklist*, 63, June 15, 1967, p. 1099.

5. Review of *The Owl Service*, ed. Zena Sutherland, *Center for Children's Books Bulletin*, 22, December 1968, p. 58.

6. J. R. Townsend, *A Sounding of Storytellers*, Philadelphia: Lippincott, p. 82.

7. Paul Heins, "Off the Beaten Path," *Horn Book*, 49, December 1973, p. 580.

8. David Rees, "Alan Garner: Some Doubts," *Horn Book*, 55, June 1979, p. 285.

9. Review of *Red Shift*, ed. Zena Sutherland, *Center for Children's Books Bulletin*, 27, May 1974, p. 142.

10. Justin Wintle and Emma Fisher, *The Pied Piper*, New York: Paddington Press, 1974, p. 221.

11. Aiden Chambers, "Letter From England: Literary Crossword Puzzle or Masterpiece?" *Horn Book*, 49, October 1973, p. 496.

12. Meek, p. 1081.

13. Meek, p. 1081.

She Dreams

Carol Carpenter

She dreams rooms filled with books.
Dr. Seuss in corners, yaks climb the wall.
Betsy meets the Bobsey twins and Huckleberry Finn.
Dog-eared books flow from faucets,
pages turn themselves.
Nancy Drew mysteries are mountain ranges.
Superwoman stands in snow, reciting Tennyson.
The Pigman eats mean hamburgers
on a table of paperbacks.
He drinks sentences and paragraphs.
Words dive from leather boards,
swim in her eyes, until she dries them,
wraps them in silk,
and pins them in her hair.

Carol Carpenter, recipient of the Tompkins Award for poetry and fiction from Wayne State University in 1979 and 1980, teaches at the Detroit Institute of Technology.

A Composite Portrait of the Teacher in Selected Adolescent Novels

Marian Perry

At home and school new challenges confront the modern teenager--marijuana and alcohol, offered and enjoyed even by the respectable kid next door; families warring and fracturing; bodies suddenly unwieldy, seeming askew; emotions careening wildly. The today youth struggles to cope with a never-like-this society of shifting structure and elusive values. What do these suddenly outgrown bundles of muscles and emotions need from teachers? Do they see teachers succeeding in meeting those needs?

To answer these questions, this study surveys the teen's own unique genre, the adolescent novel. The first step will be to employ what Paul Zindel uses in The Pigman, a stream of consciousness technique. The protagonist, John, experiences a series of mental images, tenuously related individually, but together forming a composite revealing the truth--his emotional state and the events which formed it. Juxtaposing quick image against image of teachers in the selected novels will produce a similar composite, a composite portrait of the fictional instructor. A second consideration will be whether or not this composite to any significant degree mirrors reality, if these fictional instructors are much like real-life teachers, at least as seen by their students. Finally, if there is indeed a close correlation, perhaps "to see ourselves as others see us" will be of value to the beleagured professional in reevaluating his or her role in the classroom and its effectiveness in meeting student needs.

The first image--one Miss Blue in M. E. Kerr's unforgettable Is That You, Miss Blue? A teacher, par excellence, who is capable of making the protagonist, Flanders Brown, say:

> She'd hooked me into listening about Newton's system with my mouth hanging open in wonder.... Most of us came away with that sort of full, silent feeling that you have after you've seen a really good movie and you have to walk out into the real world again. (p. 92)

Inspired and capable of inspiring, Miss Blue performs flawlessly, brilliantly as guide to knowledge.

Other classrooms move into focus, those of Ms. Finney, Ms. Larson, Miss Block, Mr. Poole, and a principal's office, that of Mr. Zimmerman. Perhaps drawn as slightly less brilliant than Miss Blue, they are yet highly competent educators, who, in addition, make real contributions in helping students, even their families, cope with immediate personal problems and achieve long-

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term personal growth. In Danziger's *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit*, Ms. Finney's after school class is a vital and positive support for all participants, especially the protagonist, Marcy Lewis, and her mother. Ms. Larson, of *The Pistachio Prescription* by the same author, guides the sisters Cassie and Stephanie Stephens, individually then together, into a new, open and supportive relationship. Miss Block in Wells' *The Fog Comes on Little Pig Feet* and Mr. Poole of Hamilton's *The Planet of Junior Brown* are islands of caring in an alien and frightening world for Rachael, Buddy, and Junior. In Mr. Poole's realm, "Mathematics cushioned by astronomy had...been (his) waking thought... Tough black children of city streets could lay bare their minds in his loud and open classes." (p. 154) Even a principal's office can be a haven if a man like Mr. Zimmerman is the one to whom Marcy must confess that she had refused to take off her sunglasses in class because she had overplucked her eyebrows.

Cassie Stephens herself whispers one reason that these educators succeed. Coming from Ms. Larson's class on the first day of the school year, she observes, "She smiles a lot and listens to us when we say something." (p. 55) Marcy completes the picture of teachers meeting pupil need when she sums up classes with Ms. Finney: "English class was really good. We worked hard, but it was fun." (p.32) Teachers, administrators, who both listen and guide to solid academic accomplishments--a bright image indeed.

Other classrooms. Mr. Griffin has chosen to sacrifice higher salary, university prestige, and tenure because his students come to college scholastically unprepared. A competent, concerned, meticulous teacher, he strides before his classroom and says to a basketball team member who had played sport and not English assignment the preceeding night, "Basketball is indeed an important reason for attending high school. The ability to drop balls through baskets will serve you well in life. It may even help your wrists keep limber in old age." (p. 11) He is genuinely caring, consistently sarcastic. His students, albeit unintentionally, murder him in Lois Duncan's *Killing Mr. Griffin*.

Mr. Patterson, likewise articulate, solidly versed in literature, a witty man, is evaluated by Chad in Crawford's *Letter Perfect* as a "really good teacher." Yet he and his friends blackmail and break this instructor primarily because "It's never very funny to be the brunt of Mr. Patterson's sarcasm. It's only funny to the rest of the class."

Focus on incongruity. The scene is from Richard Peck's *Don't Look and It Won't Hurt*. Perched atop a table to model in Miss Mergenthaler's art class cowers a football hero, Herb Whitby, graceful and skillful on the gridiron, off it aghast and ashamed of a suddenly enormous and gawky body. Timid for entirely opposite reasons, the diminutive Rupert Renfrew, always the smallest boy in his class, is absorbed in the assignment, sketching Herb. A booming voice and scathing tongue exhibits Rupert's work, showing the entire class the "only example of artistic merit," but a rendering entirely in nude. (p. 78) A peerless performer, this teacher humiliates both model and artist, then stalks and rants over her other classroom charges until any remaining security is blasted from the quaking class. Shirley Gage tries to help her friend, Carol, the protagonist, understand this instructor. Cool, analytical, compassionate, Shirley says, "She's just the wrong person for the job..." (p. 80) The analysis is small solace.

These teach with good intentions, with legitimate competence, yet spout biting words and wall themselves into worlds away from those they sincerely wish to help. Their sarcasm is the face before their students, masking both competence and concern.

In Zindel's My Darling, My Hamburger, honors English teacher Mr. Zamborsky sees only style and technique, nothing emotionally unusual, in Sean Collins' essay, in which Sean's never-to-be born baby terrorizes and haunts his psyche. Zamborsky is a teacher out of touch and unaware, like Miss Thompkins, who assigns an essay on "A Father I Know" to Alan's class just after the boy has returned from his devastating first-ever meeting with his father in Kerr's If I Love You Am I Trapped Forever? "Beautiful, just beautiful!" Alan moans. (p. 164) More out of touch, more ironically so, is typically Zindel grotesque, five feet, three hundred pound Mr. Meisner, counselor in Pardon Me, You're Stepping on My Eyeball. Versed sufficiently in psychology to organize the sensitivity classes in which Edna Shinglebox and Marsh Mellow meet, Mr. Meisner is probing and perceptive when he tells the group, "Most of our prejudices come from the fact that we see too much with our minds and not enough with our gut." (p. 33) He does help the students become more closely in touch with their feelings, yet when Edna comes to him, one-to-one, in her confusion over Marsh's problems, he munches on pork rinds, speaks of "ketosis" and insensitively barks, "It's none of your business." (p. 102)

The composite grows--images of teachers competent and capable of relating, competent but sarcastic, competent yet unaware, and now, competent but all-the-way afraid. Another counselor, Mr. Bernstein of Neufeld's Lisa, Bright and Dark is the one to whom Betsy Goodman turns again and again for help for Lisa. Lisa's teacher, her principal, this counselor, all fear loss of parental favor, fear risk, fear. Betsy perceives their dilemma, though she cannot condone their attitudes for their lack of positive action. She rejoices when some effort to aid, however limited, is offered. She says, "For whatever his problems were, Mr. Bernstein had done something. He had allowed himself to be drawn in a little." (p. 80)

Neil Comstock also rates Mr. Alvarado in Kin Platt's Hey, Dummy as "a very good teacher, (who) knows exactly what he wants. Mostly he wants us to learn to express ourselves." (p. 32) He exhorts the students to observe, to think, to communicate--laudable teacher objectives. He teaches tolerance to Neil, then literally slams the door in the boy's face when he comes to Alvarado for help in practicing that tolerance. Alvarado's theory is pure, his pragmatics cowardly and selfish and fearful when faced with risking his own career or his own cause.

Then come more images of dedication, having much more in their tangible environment to fear, standing unafraid yet still defeated. In ghetto classrooms Nigeria Green, Bernard Cohen, and their principal struggle to be good educators amid complex, overwhelming social forces beyond their control and understanding. In Childress' *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But A Sandwich*, Green's vision of the unslanted "truth" he sacrificed to teach, Cohen's certainty that he could teach effectively because he understood all races are to some degree enslaved, the principal's valiant competence in coping with riots, drugs, poverty are seen to be incomplete perceptions of the total forces swirling about the ghetto. All fail Benjie because, as Cohen finally realizes, "everyone is for sale on a new auction block, which is the ground underfoot, wherever we stand." (p. 38) Despite their best efforts, all are unable to rescue Benjie, lost in a world of evil and poverty. Like Brother Jacques of *The Chocolate War*, they see, albeit only in part, but cannot save.

These have been the concerned, if often unsuccessful. There are glimpses also of a few teachers who by circumstance, personality, or lack of ability do not reach out at all.

Cool, efficient, builder of the exclusive school for girls, North Place, Miss Pick's rigidity will not bend to accommodate Rachael's creativity and talent in *The Fog Comes on Little Pig Feet* by Rosemary Wells. Rigid Principal Stone in *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit* cannot see Ms. Finney's fulfillment of curriculum requirements because her methods gleam with new polish. Never very agreeable, Mr. Stoddard's personal tragedy, the loss of wife and child, solidifies a protective shell of rigid rules in *Pistachio Prescription*. Inflexibility and rules are safe, require no caring, cover imcompetence, protect from hurt, drive Rachael into rebellion.

Then there is a curious array of "check collectors," so labelled by Bernard Cohen in Childress' *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But A Sandwich*. He characterizes some of his collegues as "a white racist, a few bleeding hearts, and a couple of zombies." (p. 35) No better are a group of foibles as teachers, so enwrapped in their various eccentricities they see only themselves in the mirrors, never their students, in *Is That You, Miss Blue*?

And last comes the darkest of the images, the opposite to everything which the maturing need to prosper. *The Chocolate War*'s Brother Leon, sarcastic, devious, uncaring, actively promotes the evil, condones the physical, mental, emotional hurt, all but destroys the protagonist, Jerry Renault. Finally, ultimate dehumanizers flash lights and blare music--teacher scientists in Sleator's chilling *House of Stairs*.

The composite is complete; the stream of images is finished. Initially are a few bright segments set against greatly darker ones. There are a few in the classroom who listen, who know; there are many, who, though caring, do not listen, do not hear. What of the fate of the first bright images?

Miss Blue is dismissed and wanders, tiny and alone, in New York City. Ms. Finney, dismissed, reinstated, chooses to leave a school too structured to accommodate. Mr. Poole had long since sunk to the literal basement of the educational world "of cold molasses." He says he had "lost heart...I could no longer teach in so rigid a regime." (p. 154) Of those who heard, only Miss Block, Ms. Larson, and Mr. Zimmerman remain in their positions. Those less open, less willing to risk, less competent, more evil, survive, and Jerry Renault is afraid to defy again.

The composite when complete is obviously dark. But is it, after all, only to be studied as an interesting literary exercise, hardly pertinent to the real classroom? Has it any validity outside the covers of these novels?

In a study similar to this one, "Teachers in Adolescent Literature: Are We the Good Guys?" Ellen S. Lewis[1] also finds a very heavy preponderance of negative teacher portrayals in adolescent fiction. She concludes that the negative portraying is not a reflections of reality but is primarily due to lack of author skill in characterization, dismissing the instructors' poor ratings as "merely stereotypes."

Diametrically opposed to her thesis, however, is the students' own delineation of the teachers in these novels. As noted, in most cases, students themselves observe teacher strengths as well as failures to meet student needs. Further, whether or not the students noted teacher caring or competence, many of the strongest negative portrayals are anything but stereotypic, as is the case in the multi-faceted, vividly memorable Brother Jacques and Brother Leon in The Chocolate War, or Nigeria Green and Bernard Cohen in A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich. Therefore the negative imaging of teachers is not due to stereotyping. The authors in this survey do not present positive educators as rounded, fully developed characters, then stereotype those instructors they see as unsuccessful.

In "The Teacher in Selected Fiction for Adolescents," Helen Davis[2] compiles an even more awesome list of negative teacher portrayals. She too explores the degree to which these negative portrayals reflect reality. Her overall conclusion, like that of Ellen Lewis, is that, by and large, classroom instructors are not as seen in the novels. She believes that teen-agers, more often than not, view their world negatively, and that since adolescent novels are typically written from the teen protagonist's point of view, it is these youthful perceptions which are negative, not the teachers who are ineffective. She also points out that the "normal" teen negativism is even intensified by the creation of protagonists who are drop-outs, citing John and Lorraine from The Pigman and Dewey and Yvette from I Never Loved Your Mind, both Zindel novels, as examples.

Her position is inadequate, initially, because it is also through the teen protagonists' eyes that we see the positive figures of Ms. Finney, Ms. Larson, and the others. Secondly, that rationale fails to deal with the fictional adolescents who are anything but negative. Note the stability and balance of Betsy Goodman in Lisa, Bright and Dark, always meeting Mr. Bernstein with compassionate understanding of his problems, or the perception of Shirley Gage in Don't Look and It Won't Hurt, seeing the ranting art teacher in an empathetic light, rare to any age, but deploring the teacher's failure as an educator.

Point of view is certainly crucial to perception of reality. This is startlingly clear at the beginning of chapter five in

Killing Mr. Griffin. In the first four chapters the reader sees Mr. Griffin *only* through the squirming discomfort of his students. Suddenly in chapter five the Griffins, the teacher and his wife, are in their home, and the reader sees a quite different man. The students have known a picky, disagreeable, driving, sarcastic taskmaster. His wife and the reader now see a caring man who sacrificed much so that students might go to college better prepared academically. The issue becomes, however, not which perception is truth, for both are true, but what blocked the students' knowing and benefitting from this teacher's deep concern. Was it *only* their immaturity, their teen-age negativistic point of view, or was it his classroom sarcasm, which so completely failed to communicate his caring? Surely the latter.

So, if this largely negative vignette of the fictional teacher is not wholly attributable to author stereotyping, nor to natural teenage negative perception of authority, then an explanation must yet be sought. In "The Literature of the Adolescent: The Inevitable Battleground," Kathryn Grossberg[3] cites Stanek as saying that for the most part adolescent literature is "popular culture," and as popular culture "it can indicate a great deal about its readers...." Further in an earlier study of the historical teacher image in adult fiction, Rosemary Pell[4] postulates that "Fiction usually records the trends and values of any given time in history."

Perhaps, then, as reflected in this survey, as well as the others cited, the majority of adolescents, as in the genre uniquely their own, are not receiving the compassionate, relating, risking relationship from teachers that they seek, to say nothing of the inspired content presentation of a Miss Blue. Accepting the novels' imaging as containing a large element of truth seems inescapable. The composite does, however, also reveal much teacher strength and through presentation of various positive teacher images points a rather clear beacon to improvement. In evaluating what these novels have to say to teachers in the classroom, the following excerpt from the introduction to the 1975 Best Young Adult Book Poll seems a good summation:

> If some of these books appear questionable in terms of their topic, style, or values, they nevertheless represent the viewpoint of the adolescent who has found them relevant. It may be fruitful for the adult to ask what a book has to say about the state of adolescence, literature, and society today, rather than simply disregarding it.[5]

FOOTNOTES

1. Ellen S. Lewis, "Teachers in Adolescent Literature: Are We the Good Guys?" *The ALAN Review*, 7, 1979, p. 8.

2. Helen Davis, "The Teacher in Selected Fiction for Adolescents," *Focus: Teaching English Language Arts*, 3, 1977, pp. 4-15.

3. Kathryn Grossberg, "Literature of Adolescence: The Inevitable Battleground," *Journal of Reading*, 21, October 1977, pp. 76-80.

4. Rosemary Pell, "From Ichabod to the 'Teach': In Selected American Literature," *Contemporary Education*, 47, 1976, pp. 165-170.

5. G. Robert Carlsen, Tony Manna, and Jan Yoder, "1975 BYA Book Poll," *English Journal*, 65, January 1976, p. 95.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

My First Love & Other Disasters by Francine Pascal.
Dell, 1980. 173 pp. $1.50.

It was impossible to read this novel without remembering what it was like to be fifteen. Oh, the names and places are different and the specifics of the plot are unique, but the basic situation created by Francine Pascal is common to us all. Everyone has to have a first love. This book is humorously written in the first person by the heroine, Victoria Martin, a fifteen-year-old girl who is hopelessly in love with seventeen-year-old Jim. Naturally, since we all know how the story goes, it comes as no surprise to us that Jim doesn't know she exists. In one of her most elaborate attempts towards being noticed by Jim, Victoria cajoles her parents into allowing her to spend the summer on Fire Island as a mother's helper. As luck would have it, Jim, too, will be spending his summer on the Island. It doesn't exactly turn out to be the summer of Victoria's dreams, but that isn't surprising either. The book expertly shows the let-down that can sometimes occur when our dreams do come true and fail to meet our expectations. The plot offers a few interesting twists and lots and lots of witty insights into the joys and sorrows of first love. It is a book that can't help but bring a bittersweet smile to those who have lived through this wonderful awakening, and it is bound to offer reassurance to those whose time has come.

Reviewed by Christine DeLozier, formerly of Westbrook Junior-Senior High School, Westbrook, CT.

Young Adult Literature as a Guidance Technique

Andrew V. Beale, Ellen T. Griffin, and Alan M. McLeod

Young adult literature, because it vividly reflects and describes current trends, issues, and concerns of adolescents, has gained in popularity and acceptance among today's students and school personnel. Concurrently, there is a renewed interest in the use of bibliotherapy on the part of school counselors. More and more, counselors are using books as helpful instruments in assisting adolescents and, on occasion, their parents in understanding and, hopefully, resolving a myriad of problems.

BIBLIOTHERAPY

As defined by Russell and Schrodes, bibliotherapy is the dynamic interaction between the reader and literature which can be used for increased personal adjustment and/or growth.[1] The essential goals of bibliotherapy, as set forth by Rongione, are a) to teach a person to think constructively and positively; b) to encourage people to talk freely about their problems; c) to help people better understand their attitudes and behaviors; d) to point out that there is more than one solution to a problem; and e) to assist people in comparing their circumstances with those of others.[2] For these reasons, and because books have the recognized potential for bringing about positive changes in students' lives, counselors are coming to rely more heavily than ever before on directed reading as a counseling technique with adolescents.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

While the counselor, as a specialist in human behavior and group and interpersonal skills, is qualified to provide students with thoughtfully designed individual and group experiences, it is here that the English teacher can make a significant contribution to a school's guidance program: as a consultant to the counseling staff. With a specialized knowledge and understanding of literature, an English teacher is in a unique position to help counselors help students through carefully selected readings. By suggesting appropriate fiction or non-fiction for counselors to use with students, the English teacher is fulfilling a needed and appropriate consulting function. Because the English teacher knows students as well as books, he/she should be "expert" in the selection of books dealing with the needs and concerns of students.

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It is when the counselor and the English teacher harness their singular skills in joint efforts that bibliotherapy, or helping through literature, becomes a potent reality in a school.

While reading a book usually will not solve a problem, it can stimulate thoughtful reflection . . . and such reflection is often the key to successful conflict resolution. Reading about the problems of fictional characters can help adolescents understand better their own thoughts and feelings as well as those of others. Having fictional referrents also makes discussion with an adult easier for reluctant teens. As Louise Rosenblatt has commented, when the adolescent who lives in today's complex and diverse society turns to literature ". . . he seeks emotional release for the impulses already strong within him, but denied satisfaction in his life as a minor, he seeks also the insight he craves into the possibilities that life offers."[3] _The Chocolate War_, for example, presents aspects of peer pressure, decision-making, and of cruelties people inflict on each other. While perhaps a frightening portrait, adolescents can well identify with Jerry Renault and his struggle against Archie Costello and the system.

Flora Fennimore, in "Developing the Adolescent's Self-Concept with Literature," has suggested that young adult literature can help adolescents develop into adequate persons because it focuses on the adolescent's developing self-awareness. Adolescents internalize what has been read by relating it to their own experiences.[4] One could help adolescents develop self-awareness, for instance, by examining the lifestyles portrayed in _A Day No Pigs Would Die_, _Under the Haystack_, or _The Cat Ate My Gymsuit_ which present sensitive portrayals of adolescents accepting responsibility.

Among concerns of adolescents are feelings of alienation, awareness of injustice, family and peer relationships, physical appearance, and separation through such occurrences as death of a loved one or parental divorce. The teacher is in a position to help students with such problems, but the counselor is by training usually better equipped for this endeavor. Some young people, however, don't want to talk about their problems. Reading may give them insight into themselves and help them grow and understand their world. Effective use of books could help individuals cope with loss, identify with others, realize they are not alone, and lead them to insights which enable them to share problems or to gain the understandings necessary to sharing or overcoming problems.

The one thing an individual experiencing a crisis may not need is a book dealing with that particular crisis. More often people profit from "crisis books" before such circumstances occur in their lives or at some point well beyond the initial intensity of the crisis. In this sense we are looking at bibliotherapy, indeed all recommendations involving literature, not as a therapeutic endeavor but more as a common sense approach to helping individuals learn and grow.

SUITABLE BOOKS

Young adult literature abounds with books presenting aspects of growing up. Among those we find suitable for some adolescent concerns are:

Morale

James Herriot's All Creatures Great and Small and subsequent volumes or J.R.R. Tolkein's trilogy of the ring

Family Problems

Judy Blume's It's Not the End of the World
Robin Brancato's Blinded by the Light
Kristen Hunter's The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou
Norma Klein's Mom, the Wolfman, and Me
Harry Mazer's Guy Lenny

Death

The Collier's My Brother Sam Is Dead
Corinne Gerson's Passing Through
Barbara Girion's A Tangle of Roots
Judith Viorst's The Tenth Good Thing about Barney

Growing Up

Paul Annixter's Swiftwater
Honor Arundel's The Blanket Word
Robert Cormier's The Chocolate War
Margaret Craven's I Heard the Owl Call My Name
Anne Frank's Diary of a Young Girl
Jean George's Julie of the Wolves
Isabelle Holland's Heads You Win, Tails I Lose
Lee Kingman's Head Over Wheels
John Knowles' A Separate Peace
Chaim Potok's The Chosen and others

These and other books can serve to widen a reader's understanding of what it means to be human; they may provide vicarious experiences which help young people deal with concerns and problems they face.

Helping young people grow toward adulthood, acceptance of responsibility, and achieving a meaningful life is a team effort. All school personnel play a significant role in this effort, and it is particularly appropriate that English teachers be prepared to recommend suitable books to counselors for use with students. Growing in understanding through reading is not limited to the English classroom. Counselors, too, are developing awareness of the role teachers can play in helping them help students.

Since it would be preposterous to assume any book meets the needs or concerns of all students, we have presented a very limited listing of concerns and books. Even these books are appropriate for only some students. A teacher's own reading knowledge still serves as the best indicator of what to recommend to students and counselors. There are, however, resources which can help extend this knowledge, and we recommend the following:

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND REVIEWS

The ALAN Review, Assembly on Literature for Adolescents, NCTE.

Bibliotherapy: An Annotated Bibliography, International Reading Association.

The Bookfinder, American Guidance Service.

Books for You, NCTE.

The English Journal, NCTE.

High-Interest Easy-Reading, NCTE.

The Horn Book, The Horn Book, Inc.

Reading Ladders for Human Relations, NCTE.

Your Reading, NCTE.

RESOURCES ON BIBLIOTHERAPY

Joanne E. Bernstein, *Books to Help Children Cope with Separation and Loss*, New York: R.R. Bowker Co., 1977.

G. Robert Carlsen, *Books and the Teen-Age Reader*, Second Revised Edition, New York: Bantam, 1980.

Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen, *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980

Nancy Larrick, *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading*, New York: Doubleday, 1975.

Barbara Lindeman and M. Kling, "Bibliotherapy: Definitions, Uses, and Studies," *Journal of School Psychology*, 7 (1968-1969), pp. 34-41.

Sister Miriam Schultheis, *A Guidebook for Bibliotherapy*, Glenview: Psychotechnics, 1972.

Sheila Schwartz, *Teaching Adolescent Literature: A Humanistic Approach*, Rochelle Park: Hayden Book Company, 1979.

FOOTNOTES

1. David H. Russell and Caroline Schrodes, "Contributions of Research in Bibliotherapy to the Language Arts Program," *School Review*, 58, October 1950, pp. 411-420.

2. L. A. Rongione, "Bibliotherapy: It's Nature and Uses," Catholic Library World, November 1972, pp. 495-498.

3. Louise Rosenblatt, Literature as Exploration, Revised Edition, New York: Noble and Noble, 1968, p. 87.

4. Flora Fennimore, "Developing the Adolescent's Self-Concept with Literature," English Journal, 59, December 1970, pp. 1272-1275.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Dangerous Game by Milton Dank.
Dell, 1980. 157 pp. $1.50.

In his postscript, Milton Dank states that "this book is a fictional recreation of the years of terror and courage when France was occupied by the German army." The account of such terror and courage, especially when told by an author skilled in character motivation and plot continuity, draws any high school reader inexorably into the very frightening, very real, world of the French Resistance in the early days of World War II. Focusing on 16-year-old Charles Marceau (later known as Falcon after he joins the Resistance), The Dangerous Game does not become lost in romantic illusion or Bondian fantasy about war and espionage. Rather, it shows in ominous clarity the world inhabited by this "army of shadows," a world filled with suspense, betrayal, escape, capture, duty, and honor. And at the heart of this clandestine life, there is always the understanding of what ultimately is at stake--the willingness to sacrifice one's own life in order to make France free again. None of our students may ever be involved in such dangerous intrigue as is Charles Marceau. But each one will certainly experience situations where his or her beliefs will be questioned, criticized, and even ridiculed. At those times, perhaps he'll remember Falcon's courage, and maintain, at all costs, the strength of his own values.

Reviewed by Michael J. Valovcin, Seymour High School, Seymour, CT.

Urban Teen Concerns and Young Adult Novels

Richard F. Abrahamson and Katherine K. Newman

Very little has been written about adolescent literature and its use with inner city teens. Curiously, when The English Journal published its November 1979 issue on "Teaching English in the City," not one article even mentioned the reading of adolescent literature by inner city youngsters. Perhaps, people reason, teenagers are all alike and, since they all go through the same developmental tasks so often made a major part of YA novels, it simply goes without saying that YA literature would be worthwhile, entertaining, and relevant reading for urban teenagers. It has been our experience, however, that YA literature is often not used in inner city schools. Urban youngsters are more likely to be filed through traditional English and American literary anthologies.

The reasons for the absence of YA literature in urban English classes are complex: funds are often not available for supplementary books; in the current press for accountability, teachers feel compelled to cover the curriculum without frills; the daily problems of inner city teaching leave teachers with little time and energy to innovate. Yet inner city teachers feel an ongoing need to reach their students, to provide a curriculum that will help them face their lives realistically and constructively.

Inner city students live in a world of social disorganization and violence, yet with glimpses of stability and opportunity. The journals of urban teens frequently reflect that they simultaneously hold contradictory values as they attempt to deal with the reality of their world. Three of these belief conflicts appear to be critical in their lives.

1. RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY AND OBEY THE LAWS

VERSUS

MANY LAWS AND PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY AREN'T WORTHY OF RESPECT

Let's look first at the inner city teen's conflict between laws, authority, and respect. It's probably not surprising that policemen are often at the center of this conflict. Consider these two journal entries by the same South Side Chicago teen:

> December 12: I often get into trouble at night when I'm with my friends. At night we're always running around kicking doors in, banging on windows and sometimes breaking them. (That's when we run the fastest,

---

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> and I'll be in the lead, dusting [leaving behind] them dudes.) But it's fun though.
>
> April 17: I hardly ever get ripped off (robbed) and I never want to, either. I feel it is very unnecessary, since the person who did it won't want to get ripped off himself.[1]

Then there's this one by a classmate of his:

> Journal entry: Instead of police trying to pick up the pushers off the street, they're too busy bothering innocent people who are just standing around trying to see what's happening. And while they're doing that, pushers are hooking up little kids in grammar school to dope.[2]

The dichotomy here is obvious. On the one hand these teenagers see the need for laws. All too often they live in a crime-filled world and, while they don't care to be the victims of crime, they also subscribe to the opposite view of "If I can get away with it, it's all right." This conflict is further complicated by these teens seeing the necessity of authority figures like policemen, principals, and teachers and yet, too often, feeling that these authority figures are corrupt and not worthy of respect.

Several YA novels can be used in English classes to focus discussion on this respect/law/authority dichotomy. Two books that very graphically portray the positive and negative aspects of policemen are Peter Maas' *Serpico* and Robert Daley's *Prince of the City: The True Story of a Cop Who Knew Too Much*. While both books deal with corruption, *Serpico* paints the portrait of a throughly uncorruptible lawman. Maas' book has several good things going for it. It's popular. In a 1975 survey, teachers and librarians rated it one of the top twenty nonfiction books recommended by their students.[3] Secondly, in these days of antiheroes, Serpico is a positive hero. In their new textbook *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, Ken Donelson and Alleen Nilsen address the importance of heroes. "They reassure us that although we are mortal a few individuals find ways to transcend their mortality to leave behind a record."[4]

A corrupt authority figure and, in fact, a corrupt system is evident throughout Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War*. Brother Leon is as despicable a teacher and authority figure as can be found in YA books. The book provides a focus for discussion of whether or not power corrupts. Jerry Renault's refusal to knuckle under also brings to the forefront the question of conformity and to what extent one person can "buck the system." The *Serpico* book has an obvious tie-in here as well.

Plenty of negative teachers can be found in YA books. *If I Love You, Am I Trapped Forever*; *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich*; *Hey, Dummy*; *Lisa, Bright and Dark*; and *I Never Loved Your Mind* are all filled with negative authority figures in the form of teachers. But, just as *Serpico* provided the positive image of a policeman, we owe it to our profession and to youngsters in value conflict to present the positive teacher as well. Characters like Ann Treer in Robin Brancato's *Winning* and Marcy's teacher in *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit* show professionals who are worthy of student respect.

All of these books and others like *If Beale Street Could Talk*; *Run, Shelly, Run!*; and *Confessions of a Teenage Baboon* all can be part of student/teacher interaction about this inner city conflict of laws, authority, and respect.

2. PEACE-LOVE-JOY VERSUS SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Inner city adolescents have an intense longing for peace. Like all of us, they wish for a society free of violence and hatred. In many ways this wish for peace is in conflict with the teenagers' everyday inner city environment. The student knows that in his everyday environment "he will be unable to live in peace unless he is always ready for violence."[5] These two journal entries illustrate the dichotomy:

> Journal entry: If I were a wizard I would bring peace to this world with my magical powers, have some beautiful women for myself, have a 250,000 square foot mansion, and two limosines with luxuries no one would ever imagine. I would also get rid of firearms, because after I'm finished, no one will ever again need them.[6]
>
> Written dialogue of another student:
> Susan: Hey, girl!
> Brenda: Hey!
> Susan: Did you hear about what happened?
> Brenda: No, girl, what happened?
> Susan: A girl got shot over by the school yesterday. She was coming out of the building and someone shot her in the head.
> Brenda: Anybody else get hurt?
> Susan: No, girl, just the girl who got hit in the head.[7]

There are several good adolescent novels that deal with this issue. Two of the most popular books include Frank Bonham's *Durango Street* and Sol Stein's *The Magician*. Rufus Henry of *Durango Street* finds himself in the classic conflict mentioned above. On parole, he returns to the same violent environment that caused him to be placed in jail initially. It is his intent to remain neutral and live in peace in the old neighborhood. The problem is that he must join a gang to enjoy some protection from other gangs in the area. Although the book offers some hope, readers still feel that violence is going to have to be a part of Rufus' life.

Sol Stein's The Magician is very popular with teenage readers. Sixteen-year-old Ed Japhet is a bright, non-violent, amateur magician who is brutally attacked by another student. A clever lawyer perverts the justice system and Ed's attacker is freed. Japhet's only recourse is to learn how to defend himself. He learns that lesson too well. Here is a perfect book to use in discussing the peace-survival conflict because not only are readers presented with a character torn by this dilemma but they also are presented again with the idea of unethical authority figures and laws that are perverted by clever lawyers.

The whole idea of love for all in a dog-eat-dog world brings up the issue of cults and communes. Books like Brancato's Blinded By the Light and Barbara and Betty Underwood's Hostage to Heaven present accounts of what it's like to be a teenager living in the "peace-joy-love" world of today's religious cults. The cult movement is of current interest, and these books raise questions about manipulating people, big business and religion, and the whole issue of utopian societies. Lynn Hall's Too Near the Sun is a fine YA book about a teenager living in a utopian community in Iowa. Armel's brother leaves the community for the outside world and shames his family in the process. Now Armel contemplates the same move as he looks around him at the less than perfect community members. Topics such as the hippie movement and the more recent Jim Jones horror are likely offshoots of this peace-survival conflict as well.

There is a sense in which books like The Magician, Durango Street, and Blinded By the Light lean toward a picture of America where peace and joy cannot survive in the face of a competitive survival of the fittest environment. However, there's at least one book that is filled with a very positive picture of a peaceful America and the wonderful people who are its citizens. Although Peter Jenkins' A Walk Across America wasn't written as a YA novel, it has great teen appeal. When Peter graduates from college he is filled with despair not only about America but also about himself and future directions. He decides to hike across the U.S., and what follows is the finest kind of real life adventure in the Travels with Charley tradition. In his travels Peter confronts death, prejudice, a search for religion, he falls in love, and ultimately he discovers himself. He also finds that the people who make up America are wonderful. This is a rare and glowing tribute to being alive and living in this country.

3. YOU NEED TO GET A GOOD EDUCATION TO GET A GOOD JOB

VERSUS

WHO KNOWS WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TOMORROW?

Here are three journal entries by Albert:

January 4: My New Year's resolution was to come to school and not be out so much like I do. Because it's very bad on a person who always stays out of school.

> March 30: This school is very old and broken down and no good. If they think that I am going to stay in this school, I will not... Be free in the world. I'm not free yet because I have to come to this old dump.
>
> April 10: Education is something everyone needs but doesn't have. Some people tried to get their education; some were successful, some weren't.[8]

Perhaps this one expresses the conflict best:

> "Get Ready for Tomorrow." That's a nice saying. That's what people should always think about, Getting Ready for Tomorrow. No telling what's going to happen tomorrow. Now! Now! Think what's going to happen today. Will you be killed or will you live? It's all up to God.[9]

The central conflict here involves adults who push the importance of education for the future and yet live themselves totally in the present. Teachers too are famous for the "Someday you'll need this" lecture. This push for the unknown future needs to be seen in light of a present day inner city world filled with rapes, murders, robberies, and muggings. To get through a day is somehow more meaningful than preparing for an unknown tomorrow.

S. E. Hinton's latest novel, *Tex*, is her best work since *The Outsiders*. In a way her two main characters represent either side of this value conflict. Tex is being brought up by his older brother, Mason. Tex is irresponsible, pragmatic, not very good in school, and a bit of a troublemaker. Mason is a popular athlete, and is living for a future consisting of a college education made possible by a basketball scholarship. Tex and Mason confront the world and each other with these differing viewpoints.

Another new novel that hits directly at the conflicts is Robin Brancato's *Come Alive at 505*. In this book high school senior Danny Fetzer must decide if he should go to college as his parents wish or pursue a career as a disc jockey. His life long hobby of becoming a DJ is realized when he wins a local radio station talent search but he has to face the realities of working in the broadcasting industry stripped of its glamour. Danny finally decides to take a part time job at the station while attending college the following year.

Perhaps the finest testament to the need for education, goals, and a determined vision of the future is the three part autobiography of Maya Angelou. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Gather Together in My Name*, and *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* make for fine reading, good discussion, and a feeling of joy for how dauntless the human spirit really is.

At the base of this good job/who knows what tomorrow will bring conflict is the importance of goals (educational, artistic, athletic). What is worth discussing here is the importance and feasibility of these goals. The story of Rocky, both the book and and movie, touched millions of us. Rocky is important not because he was a poor boy who got a chance, but rather that he had a goal and acted on it. Robert Lipsyte's The Contender is a classic YA novel with a 17-year-old Rocky character named Alfred. It too is a prizefighting story. Alfred's goal is to get out of the ghetto. His vehicle is boxing. Like Rocky, what is admired here is a character with a dream and the determination to act on that dream.

Angelou, Brancato, Hinton, and Lipsyte all provide English teachers with books that present this conflict that really goes beyond the need for a good education. The central conflict here involves dreams and goals and positive actions toward making them come true as opposed to settling for whatever life hands out. In many ways this issue of active striving versus apathetic acceptance may be the most important value conflict of all.

In closing, our look at the journal entries of inner city teens found youngsters in conflict. These adolescents, like all adolescents, are working on the developmental task of achieving an integrated system of values. For those teens growing up in the inner city, this task seems to be complicated by the inner city environment. The English class may be the only place where teenagers can discuss those conflicting viewpoints. Not only is literature an appropriate center for this discussion but adolescent literature offers dozens of relevant, motivating novels that highlight each one of these three conflicts.

FOOTNOTES

1. Katherine K. Newman, "Internal Value Conflict in Inner City Students," Urban Education, 12, January 1978, p. 466.
2. Newman, p. 470.
3. Noma Russell, "Popular Non-Fiction Titles for Adolescents," Arizona English Bulletin, 18, April 1976, p. 49.
4. Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilson, Literature for Today's Young Adults, Glenview, IL.: Scott, Foresman, 1980, p. 293.
5. Newman, p. 471.
6. Newman, p. 471.
7. Newman, p. 473.
8. Newman, p. 472.
9. Newman, p. 474.

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